



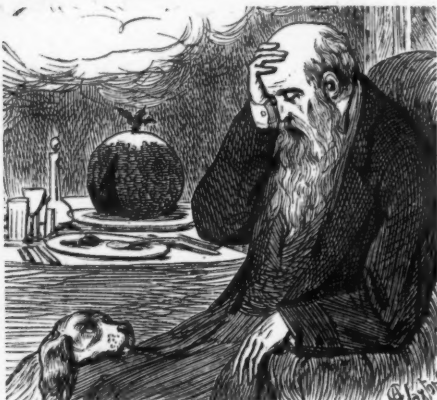
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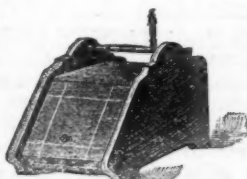


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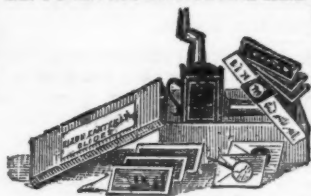
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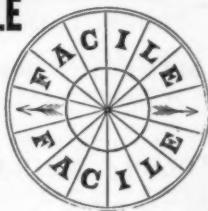
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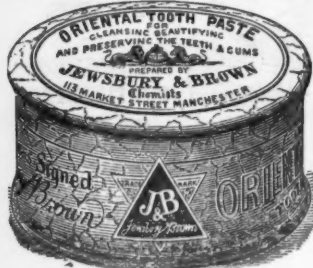
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# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER 1885.

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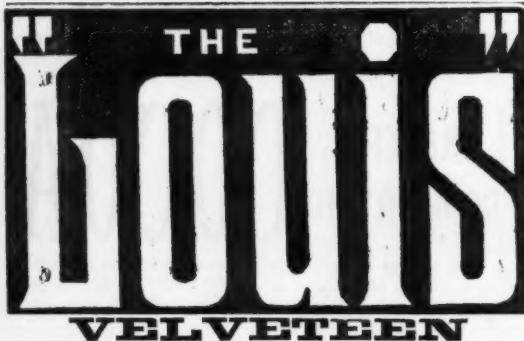
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# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

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DECEMBER 1885.

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## *White Heather :*

A NOVEL.

BY WILLIAM BLACK.

### CHAPTER XLV.

IN ABSENCE.

LOCH NAVER lay calm and still under the slow awakening of the dawn. All along the eastern horizon the low-lying hills were of a velvet-textured olive-green—a mysterious shadow-land where no detail was visible; but overhead the skies were turning to a clear and luminous grey; the roseate tinge was leaving the upper slopes of Ben Loyal and Ben Clebrig; and the glassy surface of the lake was gradually whitening as the red-golden light changed to silver and broadened up and through the wide sleeping world. An intense silence lay over the little hamlet among the trees; not even a dog was stirring; but a tiny column of pale blue smoke issuing from one of the chimneys told that some one was awake within—probably the yellow-haired Nelly, whose duties began at an early hour.

And what was Meenie—or Rose Meenie, or Love Meenie, as she might be called now, after having all those things written about her—what was she doing awake and up at such a time? At all events, her morning greeting was there confronting her. She had brought it and put it on the little dressing-table; and as she brushed out her beautiful abundant brown tresses, her eyes went back again and again to the pencilled lines, and she seemed not ill-pleased. For this was what she read :

## WHITE HEATHER.

*The hinds are feeding upon the hill,  
And the hares on the fallow lea ;  
Awake, awake, Love Meenie !  
Birds are singing in every tree ;*

*And roses you'll find on your window-sill  
To scent the morning air ;  
Awake, awake, Love Meenie,  
For the world is shining fair !*

*O who is the mistress of bird and flower ?  
Ben Clebrig knows, I ween !  
Awake, awake, Love Meenie,  
To show them their mistress and queen !*

And it could hardly be expected that she should bring any very keen critical scrutiny to bear on these idle verses of Ronald's (of which she had now obtained a goodly number, by dint of wheedling and entreaty, and even downright insistence), seeing that nearly all of them were written in her praise and honour ; but even apart from that she had convinced herself that they were very fine indeed ; and that one or two of them were really pathetic ; and she was not without the hope that, when the serious affairs of life had been attended to, and a little leisure and contemplation become possible, Ronald might turn to his poetical labours again and win some little bit of a name for himself amongst a few sympathetic souls here and there. That he could do so, if he chose, she was sure enough. It was all very well for him to make light of these scraps and fragments ; and to threaten to destroy them if she revealed the fact of their existence to anybody ; but she knew their worth, if he did not ; and when, in this or that magazine or review, she saw a piece of poetry mentioned with praise, her first impulse was to quickly read it in order to ask herself whether Ronald—given time and opportunity—could not have done as well. Moreover, the answer to that question was invariably the same ; and it did not leave her unhappy. It is true (for she would be entirely dispassionate) he had not written anything quite so fine as 'Christabel'—as yet ; but the years were before him ; she had confidence ; the world should see—and give him a fitting welcome all in good time.

When, on this clear morning, she was fully equipped for her walk, she stole silently down the stair, and made her way out into the now awakening day. The little hamlet was showing signs of life. A stable-lad was trying to get hold of a horse that had

strayed into the meadow; a collie was barking its excitement over this performance; the pretty Nelly appeared carrying an armful of clothes to be hung out to dry. And then, as Meenie passed the inn, she was joined by Harry the terrier, who, after the first grovelling demonstrations of joy, seemed to take it for granted that he was to be allowed to accompany her. And she was nothing loth. The fact was, she was setting out in quest of that distant eyrie of Ronald's of which he had often told her; and she doubted very much whether she would be able to find it; and she considered that perhaps the little terrier might help her. Would he not naturally make for his master's accustomed resting-place, when they were sufficiently high up on the far Clebrig slopes?

So they went away along the road together; and she was talking to her companion; and telling him a good deal more about Glasgow, and about his master, than probably he could understand. Considering, indeed, that this young lady had just been sent home in deep disgrace, she seemed in excellent spirits. She had borne the parting admonitions and upbraidings of her sister Agatha with a most astonishing indifference; she had received her mother's reproaches with a placid equanimity that the little woman could not understand at all (only that Meenie's face once or twice grew fixed and proud when there was some scornful reference to Ronald); and she had forthwith set about nursing her father—who had caught a severe chill and was in bed—with an amiable assiduity, just as if nothing had happened. As regards her father, he either did not know, or had refused to know, about Meenie's lamentable conduct. On this one point he was hopelessly perverse; he never would listen to anything said against this daughter of his; Meenie was always in the right—no matter what it was. And so, notwithstanding that she had been sent home as one in disgrace, and had been received as one in disgrace, she installed herself as her father's nurse with an amazing self-content; and she brought him his beef-tea and port-wine at the stated intervals (for the good doctor did not seem to have as much faith in drugs as might have been anticipated); and she kept the peat-fire piled up and blazing; and she methodically read to him the *Inverness Courier*, the *Glasgow Weekly Citizen* and the *Edinburgh Scotsman*; and when these were done she would get out a volume of old ballads, or perhaps 'The Eve of St. Agnes,' or 'Esmond,' or 'As You Like It,' or the 'Winter's Tale.' It did not matter much to him what she read; he liked to hear the sound of Meenie's voice—in this hushed, half-slumberous, warm little

room, while the chill north winds howled without, chasing each other across the driven loch, and sighing and sobbing away along the lonely Strath Terry.

But on this fair morning there was not a breath stirring; and the curving bays, and promontories, and birch-woods, and the far hills beyond, were all reflected in the magic mirror of the lake, as she sped along the highway, making for the Clebrig slopes. And soon she was mounting these—with the light step of one trained to the heather; and ever as she got higher and higher the vast panorama around her grew wider and more wide, until she could see hills and lochs and wooded islands that never were visible from Inver-Mudal. In the perfect silence, the sudden whirr of a startled grouse made her heart jump. A hare—that looked remarkably like a cat, for there was as much white as bluish-brown about it—got up almost at her feet and sped swiftly away over heath and rock until it disappeared in one of the numerous peat-bogs. There was a solitary eagle slowly circling in the blue; but at so great a height that it was but a speck. At one moment she thought she had caught sight of the antlers of a stag; and for a second she stopped short, rather frightened; but presently she had convinced herself that these were but two bits of withered birch, appearing over the edge of a rock far above her. It was a little chillier here; but the brisk exercise kept her warm. And still she toiled on and on; until she knew, or guessed, that she was high enough; and now the question was to discover the whereabouts of the clump of rocks under shelter of which Ronald was accustomed to sit, when he had been up here alone, dreaming day-dreams, and scribbling the foolish rhymes that had won to her favour, whatever he might think of them.

At first this seemed a hopeless task; for the whole place was a wilderness of moss and heather and peat-bogs, with scarcely a distinctive feature anywhere. But she wandered about, watching the little terrier covertly; and at last she saw him put his nose in an enquiring way into a hole underneath some tumbled boulders. He turned and looked at her; she followed. And now there could be no doubt that this was Ronald's halting-place and pulpit of meditation; for she forthwith discovered the hidden case at the back of the little cave—though the key of that now belonged to his successor. And so, in much content, she sate herself down on the heather; with all the wide, sunlit, still world mapped out

before her—the silver thread of Mudal Water visible here and there among the moors, and Loch Meadie with its islands, and Ben Hope and Ben Loyal, and Bonnie Strath Naver, and the far Kyle of Tongue close to the northern Sea.

Now, what had Love Meenie climbed all this height for? what but to read herself back into the time when Ronald used to come here alone; and to think of what he had been thinking; and to picture herself as still an unconscious maiden wandering about that distant little hamlet that seemed but two or three dots down there among the trees. This, or something like it, has always been a favourite pastime with lovers; but Meenie had an additional source of interest in the possession of a packet of those idle rhymes, and these were a kind of key to bygone moods and days. And so it was here—in this strange stillness—that Ronald had written these verses about her; and perhaps caught a glimpse of her, with his telescope, as she came out from the cottage to intercept the mail; when little indeed was she dreaming that he had any such fancies in his head. And now as she turned over page after page, sometimes she laughed a little, when she came to something that seemed a trifle audacious—and she scarcely wondered that he had been afraid of her seeing such bold declarations: and then again a kind of compunction filled her heart; and she wished that Ronald had not praised her so; for what had she done to deserve it; and how would her coming life be made to correspond with these all too generous and exalted estimates of her character? Of course she liked well enough to come upon praises of her abundant brown hair, and her Highland eyes, and the rose-leaf tint of her cheeks, and the lightness of her step; for she was aware of these things as well as he; and glad enough that she possessed them, for had they not commended her to him? But as for these other wonderful graces of mind and disposition with which he had adorned her? She was sadly afraid that he would find her stupid, ill-instructed, unread, fractious, unreasonable, incapable of understanding him. Look, for example, how he could imbue these hills and moors and vales with a kind of magic, so that they seemed to become his personal friends. To her they were all dead things (except Mudal Water, at times, on the summer evenings), but to him they seemed instinct with life. They spoke to him; and he to them; he understood them; they were his companions and friends; who but himself could tell of what this very hill of Clebrig was thinking?—

## WHITE HEATHER.

*Ben Clebrig's a blaze of splendour  
 In the first red flush of the morn,  
 And his gaze is fixed on the eastward  
 To greet the day new-born ;  
 And he listens a-still for the bellow  
 Of the antlered stag afar,  
 And he laughs at the royal challenge,  
 The hoarse, harsh challenge of war.*

*But Ben Clebrig is gentle and placid  
 When the sun sinks into the west,  
 And a mild and a mellow radiance  
 Shines on his giant crest ;  
 For he's looking down upon Meenie  
 As she wanders along the road,  
 And the mountain bestows his blessing  
 On the fairest child of God.*

There again: what could he see in her (she asked herself) that he should write of her so? He had declared to her that the magic with which all this neighbourhood was imbued was due to her presence there; but how could she, knowing herself as she did, believe that? And how to show her gratitude to him; and her faith in him; and her confidence as to the future? Well, she could but give to him her life and the love that was the life of her life—if these were worth the taking.

But there was one among these many pieces that she had pondered over which she returned to again and again, and with a kind of pride; and that not because it sounded her praises, but because it assured her hopes. As for Ronald's material success in life, she was troubled with little doubt about that. It might be a long time before he could come to claim his wife; but she was content to wait; in that direction she had no fears whatever. But there was something beyond that. She looked forward to the day when even the Stuarts of Glengask and Orosay should know what manner of man this was whom she had chosen for her husband. Her mother had called him an uneducated peasant; but she paid no heed to the taunt; rather she was thinking of the time when Ronald—other things being settled—might perhaps go to Edinburgh, and get to know some one holding the position there that Jeffrey used to hold (her reading was a little old-fashioned) who would introduce him to the world of letters and open the way to fame. She knew nothing of Carry Hodson's luckless attempt in this direction; she knew, on the contrary, that Ronald was

strongly averse from having any of these scraps printed ; but she said to herself that the fitting time would come. And if these unpolished verses are found to belie her confident and proud prognostications as to the future, let it be remembered that she was hardly nineteen, that she was exceedingly warm-hearted, that she was a young wife, and day and night with little to think about but the perfections of her lover, and his kindness to her, and his praise of her, and the honour in which he held her. However, this piece was not about Meenie at all—he had called it

## BY ISLAY'S SHORES.

*By Islay's shores she sate and sang :*  
*' O winds, come blowing o'er the sea,*  
*And bring me back my love again*  
*That went to fight in Germanie !'*

*And all the live-long day she sang,*  
*And nursed the bairn upon her knee :*  
*' Balou, balou, my bonnie bairn,*  
*Thy father's far in Germanie,*

*But ere the summer days are gane,*  
*And winter blackens bush and tree,*  
*Thy father will we welcome hame*  
*Frae the red wars in Germanie.'*

*O dark the night fell, dark and mirk ;*  
*A wraith stood by her icily :*  
*' Dear wife, I'll never more win hame,*  
*For I am slain in Germanie.*

*On Minden's field I'm lying stark,*  
*And Heaven is now my far countrie ;*  
*Farewell, dear wife, farewell, farewell,*  
*I'll ne'er win hame frae Germanie.'*

*And all the year she came and went,*  
*And wandered wild frae sea to sea ;*  
*' O neighbours, is he ne'er come back,*  
*My love that went to Germanie ?'*

*Port Ellen saw her many a time ;*  
*Round by Port Askaig wandered she :*  
*' Where is the ship that's sailing in*  
*With my dear love frae Germanie ?'*

## WHITE HEATHER.

*But when the darkened winter fell :*

*' It's cold for baith my bairn and me ;*

*Let me lie down and rest awhile :*

*My love's away frae Germanie.*

*O far away and away he dwells ;*

*High Heaven is now his fair countrie ;*

*And there he stands—with arms outstretched—*

*To welcome hame my bairn and me !' ,*

And if Meenie's eyes were filled with tears when she had re-read the familiar lines, her heart was proud enough ; and all her kinsmen of Glengask and Orosay had no terrors for her ; and her mother's taunts no sting. Of course, all this that she hoped for was far away in the future ; but even as regarded the immediate years before her she refused to be harassed by any doubt. Perhaps she would not have asserted in set terms that a knack of stringing verses together proved that the writer had also the capacity and knowledge and judgment necessary to drain, and fence, and plant and stock a Highland estate ; abstract questions of the kind had little interest for her ; what she did know—what formed the first article of her creed, and the last, and the intervening thirty-seven—was that Ronald could do anything he put his mind to. And this was a highly useful and comfortable belief, considering all her circumstances.

And so she sped away down the mountain-side again—glad to have discovered Ronald's retreat ; and so light and swift was her step that when she at length reached the inn she found herself just ahead of the mail coming in from the south. Of course she waited for letters ; and when Mrs. Murray had opened the bags, it was found there were three for the doctor's cottage. The first was from Ronald ; that Meenie whipped into her pocket. The second was for Mrs. Douglas, and clearly in Agatha's handwriting. The third, addressed to Meenie, had an American stamp on it ; and this was the one that she opened and read, as she quietly walked homeward.

It was a long letter ; and it was from Miss Carry Hodson ; who first of all described the accident that had befallen her, and her subsequent illness ; and plainly intimated that no such thing would have happened had her Highland friends been in charge of the boat. Then she went on to say that her father had just sailed for Europe ; that he had business to transact in Scotland ; that he wished to see Ronald ; and would Miss Douglas be so very

kind as to ask the innkeeper or the post-master at Lairg, or any one who knew Ronald's address in Glasgow, to drop a post-card to her father, addressed to the Langham Hotel, London, with the information. Moreover, her father had intimated his intention of taking the Loch Naver salmon-fishing for the next season, if it was not as yet let; and in that case the writer would be overjoyed to find herself once more among her Inver-Mudal friends. Finally, and as a kind of reminder and keepsake, she had sent by her father a carriage-rug made mostly of chipmunk skins; and she would ask Miss Douglas's acceptance of it; and hoped that it would keep her knees snug and warm and comfortable when the winds were blowing too sharply along Strath Terry.

Of course, all this was wonderful news to come to such a quiet and remote corner of the world; but there was other news as well; and that by an odd coincidence. Some little time after Mrs. Douglas had received the letter from Agatha, she came to Meenie.

'Williamina,' said she, 'Agatha writes to me about Mr. Frank Lauder.'

'Yes?' said Meenie, rather coldly.

'He intends renting the salmon-fishing on the loch for the next season; and he will be alone at the inn. Agatha hopes that we shall be particularly civil to him; and I hope—I say, I hope—that every one in this house will be. It is of the greatest importance, considering how he stands with regard to Mr. Gemmill. I hope he will be received in this house with every attention and kindness.'

And then the pompous little dame left. It was almost a challenge she had thrown down; and Meenie was at first a little bewildered. What then?—would this young man, for the six weeks or two months of his stay, be their constant visitor? He would sit in the little parlour, evening after evening; and how could she keep him from talking to her, and how could she keep him from looking at her? And Ronald—her husband—would be far away; and alone, perhaps; and not allowed a word with her; whereas she would have to be civil and polite to this young man; and even if she held her eyes downcast, how could she help his regarding her face?

And then she suddenly bethought her of Miss Hodson's letter. What?—was Mr. Hodson after the fishing, too? And ought not the last tenant to have the refusal? And should not the duke's agent know? And why should she not write him a

note—just in case no inquiry had been made? She had not much time to think about the matter; but she guessed quickly enough that, if an American millionaire and the son of a Glasgow merchant are after the same thing, and that thing purchasable, the American is likely to get it. And why should Ronald's wife be stared at and talked to by this young man—however harmless and amiable his intentions?

So she went swiftly to her own room and wrote as follows:—

‘Dear Mr. Crawford,—I have just heard from Miss Hodson, whose father was here last spring, that he is on his way to Europe; and that he hopes to have the fishing again this year. I think I ought to let you know, just in case you should have any other application for the loch. I am sure Miss Hodson will be much disappointed if he does not get it. Yours sincerely,

‘MEENIE S. DOUGLAS.’

‘There,’ said she, and there was a little smile of triumph about her mouth, ‘if that doesn’t put a spoke in the wheel of Mr. Frank Lauder, poor fellow, I don’t know what will.’

‘Spiteful little cat,’ her sister Agatha would have called her, had she known; but women’s judgments of women are not as men’s.

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## CHAPTER XLVI.

### WANDERINGS IN THE WEST.

On a singularly clear and brilliant morning in February a large and heavy screw steamer slowly crept out of the land-locked little harbour of Portree, and steadily made away for the north. For her the squally Ben Inivaig at the mouth of the channel had no terrors; indeed, what could any vessel fear on such a morning as this? When they got well out into Raasay Sound, it seemed as if the whole world had been changed into a pantomime-scene. The sky was calm and cloudless; the sea was as glass, and of the most dazzling blue; and those masses of white that appeared on that perfect mirror were the reflections of the snow-powdered islands—Raasay, and Fladda, and South Rona—that gleamed and shone and sparkled there in the sun. Not often are the wide waters of the Minch so fair and calm in mid-winter; the more usual thing is northerly gales, with black seas thundering by into Loch Staffin and Kilmaluag Bay, or breaking into sheets and

spouts of foam along the headlands of Aird Point and Ru Hunish. This was as a holiday trip, but for the sharp cold. The islands were white as a solan's wing—save along the shores; the sea was of a sapphire blue; and when they got by Rona Light behold the distant snow-crowned hills of Ross and Cromarty rose faint and spectral and wonderful into the pale and summer-like sky. The men sung '*Fhir a Bhata*' as they scoured the brass and scrubbed the decks; the passengers marched up and down, clapping their hands to keep them warm; and ever as the heavy steamer forged on its way, the world of blue sea and sky and snow-white hills opened out before them, until some declared at last that in the far north they could make out the Shiant Isles.

Now under shelter of the companion-way leading down into the saloon, three men were standing, and two of them were engaged in an animated conversation. The third, who was Mr. Hodson, merely looked on and listened, a little amused, apparently. One of the others—a tall, heavy-bearded, north-Highland-looking man—was Mr. Carmichael, a famous estate-agent in London, who had run two or three commissions together as an excuse for this midwinter trip. The third member of the group was Ronald, who was hammering away in his usual dogmatic fashion.

'Pedigree? The pride of having ancestors?' he was saying. 'Why, there's not a man alive whose ancestry does not stretch as far back as any other man's ancestry. Take it any way ye like: if Adam was our grandfather, then we're all his grandchildren; or if we are descended from a jellyfish or a monkey, the line is of the same length for all of us—for dukes, and kings, and herd-laddies. The only difference is this, that some know the names of their forefathers, and some don't; and the presumption is that the man whose people have left no story behind them is come of a more moral, useful, sober, hard-working race than the man whose forbears were famous cutthroats in the middle ages, or dishonest lawyers, or king's favourites. It's plain John Smith that has made up the wealth of this country; and that has built her ships for her, and defended her, and put her where she is; and John Smith had his ancestors at Cressy and Agincourt as well as the rest—ay, and they had the bulk of the fighting to do, I'll be bound; but I think none the worse of him because he cannot tell you their names or plaster his walls with coats of arms. However, it's idle talking about a matter of sentiment, and that's the fact; and so, if you'll excuse me, I'll just go down into the cabin, and write a couple o' letters.'

A minute or so after he had disappeared, Mr. Hodson (who looked miserably cold, to tell the truth, though he was wrapped from head to heel in voluminous furs) motioned his companion to come a few yards aside, so that they could talk without fear of being overheard.

‘Now,’ said he, in his slow and distinct way, ‘now we are alone, I want you to tell me what you think of that young man.’

‘I don’t like his politics,’ was the prompt and blunt answer.

‘No more do I,’ said Mr. Hodson, coolly. ‘But for another reason. You call him a Radical, I call him a Tory. But no matter—I don’t mean about politics. Politics?—who but a fool bothers his head about politics—unless he can make money out of them? No, I mean something more practical than that. Here have you and he been together these three days, talking about the one subject nearly all the time—I mean, the management of these Highland estates, and the nature of the ground, and what should be done, and all that. Well, now, you are a man of great experience; and I want you to tell me what you think of this young fellow. I want you to tell me honestly; and it will be in strict confidence, I assure you. Now, has he got a good solid grip of the thing? Does he know? Does he catch on? Is he safe? Is he to be trusted?—’

‘Oh, there, there, there!’ said the big estate-agent, interrupting through mere good-nature. ‘That’s quite another thing—quite another thing. I’ve not a word to say against him there—no, quite the other way—a shrewd-headed, capable fellow he is, with a groundwork of practical knowledge that no man ever yet got out of books. As sharp-eyed a fellow as I have come across for many a day—didn’t you see how he guessed at the weak points of that Mull place before ever he set foot ashore? Quick at figures, too—oh, yes, yes, a capable fellow I call him; he has been posting himself up, I can see; but it’s where his practical knowledge comes in that he’s of value. When it’s a question of vineries, or something like that, then he goes by the book—that’s useless.’

Mr. Hodson listened in silence; and his manner showed nothing.

‘I have been thinking he would be a valuable man for me, the agent said, presently.

‘In your office?’ said Mr. Hodson, raising his eyes.

‘Yes. And for this reason. You see, if he would only keep away from those d—d politics of his, he is a very good-natured fellow, and he has got an off-hand way with him that makes

shepherds, and keepers, and people of that kind friendly; the result is that he gets all the information that he wants—and that isn't always an easy thing to get. Now if I had a man like that in my office, whom I could send with a client thinking of purchasing an estate—to advise him—to get at the truth—and to be an intelligent and agreeable travelling-companion at the same time—that would be a useful thing.'

'Say, now,' continued Mr. Hodson (who was attending mostly to his own meditations) 'do you think, from what you've seen of this young man, that he has the knowledge and business-capacity to be overseer—factor, you call it, don't you?—of an estate—not a large estate, but perhaps about the size of the one we saw yesterday, or this one we are going to now? Would he go the right way about it? Would he understand what had to be done—I mean, in improving the land, and getting the most out of it—'

Mr. Carmichael laughed.

'It's not a fair question,' said he. 'Your friend Strang and I are too much of one opinion—ay, on every point we're agreed—for many's the long talk we've had over the matter.'

'I know—I know,' Mr. Hodson said. 'Though I was only half-listening; for when you got to feu-duties and public burdens and things of that kind I lost my reckoning. But you say that you and Strang are agreed as to the proper way of managing a Highland estate: very well; assuming your theories to be correct, is he capable of carrying them out?'

'I think so—I should say undoubtedly—I don't think I would myself hesitate about trusting him with such a place—that is, when I had made sufficient inquiries about his character, and got some money guarantee about his stewardship. But then, you see, Mr. Hodson, I'm afraid if you were to let Strang go his own way in working up an estate, so as to get the most marketable value into it, you and he would have different opinions at the outset. I mean with such an estate as you would find over there,' he added, indicating with his finger the long stretch of wild and mountainous country they were approaching. 'On rough and hilly land like that, in nine cases out of ten you may depend on it, it's foresting that pays.'

'But that's settled,' Mr. Hodson retorted, rather sharply. 'I have already told you, and Strang too, that if I buy a place up here I will not have a stag or a hind from end to end of it.'

'Faith, they're things easy to get rid of,' the other said, good-

naturedly. 'They'll not elbow you into the hedge if you meet them on the road.'

'No; I have heard too much. Why, you yourself said that the very name of American stank in the nostrils of the Highlanders.'

'Can you wonder?' said Mr. Carmichael, quietly: they had been talking the night before of certain notorious doings, on the part of an American lessee, which were provoking much newspaper comment at the time.

'Well, what I say is this—if I buy a place in the Highlands—and no one can compel me to buy it—it is merely a fancy I have had for two or three years back, and I can give it up if I choose—but what I say is, if I do buy a place in the Highlands, I will hold it on such conditions that I shall be able to bring my family to live on it, and that I shall be able to leave it to my boy, without shame. I will not associate myself with a system that has wrought such cruelty and tyranny. No; I will not allow a single acre to be forested.'

'There's such a quantity of the land good for nothing but deer,' Mr. Carmichael said, almost plaintively. 'If you only saw it!—you're going now by what the newspaper writers say—people who never were near a deer-forest in their lives.'

'Good for nothing but deer? But what about the black cattle that Ronald—that Strang—is always talking about?' was the retort—and Mr. Hodson showed a very unusual vehemence, or, at least, impatience. 'Well, I don't care. That has got nothing to do with me. But it has got to do with my factor, or overseer, or whatever he is. And between him and me this is how it will lie: 'If you can't work my estate, big or small as it may be, without putting the main part of it under deer, and beginning to filch grazings here and there, and driving the crofters down to the sea-shore, and preventing a harmless traveller from having a Sunday walk over the hills, then out you go. You may be fit for some other place: not for mine.' Then he went on in a milder strain. 'And Strang knows that very well. No doubt, if I were to put him in a position of trust like that, he might be ambitious to give a good account of his stewardship; I think, very likely he would be, for he's a young man; but if I buy a place in the Highlands, it will have to be managed as I wish it to be managed. When I said that I wanted the most made out of the land, I did not mean the most money. No. I should be glad to have four per cent. for my investment; if I can't have that, I should be

content with three ; but it is not as a commercial speculation that I shall go into the affair, if I go into it at all. My wants are simple enough. As I tell you, I admire the beautiful, wild country; I like the people—what little I have seen of them; and if I can get a picturesque bit of territory somewhere along this western coast, I should like to give my family a kind of foothold in Europe, and I dare say my boy might be glad to spend his autumns here, and have a turn at the grouse. But for the most part of the time the place would be under control of the factor; and I want a factor who will work the estate under certain specified conditions. First, no foresting. Then I would have the crofts re-valued—as fairly as might be; no crofter to be liable to removal who paid his rent. The sheep-farms would go by their market-value, though I would not willingly disturb any tenant; however, in that case, I should be inclined to try Strang's plan of having those black cattle on my own account. I would have the cottars taken away from the crofts (allowing for the rent paid to the crofter, for that would be but fair, when the value of the crofts was settled) and I would build for them a model village, which you might look upon as a philanthropic fad of my own, to be paid for separately. No gratuitous grazing anywhere to crofter or cottar; that is but the parent of subsequent squabbles. Then I would have all the draining and planting and improving of the estate done by the local hands, so far as that was practicable. And then I should want four per cent. return on the purchase-money; and I should not be much disappointed with three; and perhaps (though I would not admit this to anybody) if I saw the little community thriving and satisfied—and reckoning also the honour and glory of my being a king on my own small domain—I might even be content with two per cent. Now, Mr. Carmichael, is this practicable? And is this young fellow the man to undertake it? I would make it worth his while. I should not like to say anything about payment by results or per-centage on profits; that might tempt him to screw it out of the poorer people when he was left master—though he does not talk like that kind of a fellow. I wrote to Lord Ailine about him; and got the best of characters. I went and saw the old man who is coaching him for that forestry examination; he is quite confident about the result—not that I care much about that myself. What do you say, now? You ought to be able to judge.'

Mr. Carmichael hesitated.

'If you got the estate at a fair price,' he said at length, 'it

might be practicable, though these improvement-schemes suck in money as a sponge sucks in water. And as for this young fellow—well, I should think he would be just the man for the place—active, energetic, shrewd-headed, and a pretty good hand at managing folk, as I should guess. But, you know, before giving any one an important post like that—and especially with your going back to America for the best part of every year—I think you ought to have some sort of money guarantee as a kind of safeguard. It's usual. God forbid I should suggest anything against the lad—he's as honest-looking as my own two boys, and I can say no more than that—still, business is business. A couple of sureties, now, of 500*l.* apiece, might be sufficient.'

'It's usual?' repeated Mr. Hodson, absently. 'Yes, I suppose it is. Pretty hard on a young fellow, though, if he can't find the sureties. A thousand pounds is a big figure for one in his position. He has told me about his father and his brother: they're not in it, anyhow—both of them with hardly a sixpence to spare. However, it's no use talking about it until we see whether this place here is satisfactory; and even then don't say a word about it to him; for if some such post were to be offered to him—and if the securities were all right and so forth—it has got to be given to him as a little present from an American young lady, if you can call it a present when you merely propose to pay a man a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. And I am less hopeful now; the three places we have looked at were clearly out of the question; and my Highland mansion may prove to be a castle in Spain after all.'

The steamer was now slowing into the wide, still loch; and they had to get below to put their things together and prepare for going ashore. Very deserted did the big hotel look amid this wintry landscape; but they had telegraphed for rooms; and everything was in readiness for them; while the agent for the estate they were going to inspect was waiting for them, waggonette and all at the door. They started almost directly; and a long and desperately cold drive it proved to be; Mr. Hodson, for one, was glad enough when they dismounted at the keeper's cottage where their tramp over the ground was to begin—he did not care how rough the country might be, so long as he could keep moving briskly.

Now it had been very clear during these past few days that Ronald had not the slightest suspicion that Mr. Hodson, in contemplating the purchase of a Highland estate (which was an old

project of his), had also in his eye some scheme for Ronald's own advancement. All the way through he had been endeavouring to spy out the nakedness of the land, and to demonstrate its shortcomings. He considered that was his business. Mr. Hodson had engaged him—at what he considered the munificent terms of a guinea a day and all expenses paid—to come and give his advice; and he deemed it his duty to find out everything, especially whatever was detrimental, about such places as they visited, so that there should be no swindling bargain. And so on this Ross-shire estate of Balnavrain, he was proving himself a hard critic. This was hopelessly bleak; that was worthless bog-land;—why was there no fencing along those cliffs?—where were the roads for the peats?—who had had control over the burning of the heather?—wasn't it strange that all along these tops they had not put up more than a couple of coveys of grouse, a hare or two, and a single ptarmigan? But all at once, when they had toiled across this unpromising and hilly wilderness, they came upon a scene of the most startling beauty—for now they were looking down and out on the western sea, that was a motionless mirror of blue and white; and near them was a wall of picturesquely wooded cliffs; and below that again, and sloping to the shore, a series of natural plateaus and carefully planted enclosures; while stretching away inland was a fertile valley, with smart farm-houses, and snug clumps of trees, and a meandering river that had salmon obviously written on every square foot of its partially frozen surface.

'What a situation for a house!' was Ronald's involuntary exclamation—as he looked down on the sheltered semi-circle below him, guarded on the east and north by the cliffs, and facing the shining west.

'I thought ye would say that,' the agent said, with a quiet smile. 'It's many's the time I've heard Sir James say he would give 20,000*l.* if he could bring the Castle there; and he was aye minded to build there—ay, even to the day of his death, poor man; but then the Colonel, when the place came to him, said no; he would rather sell Balnavrain; and maist likely the purchaser would be for building a house to his ain mind.'

'And a most sensible notion too,' Mr. Hodson said. 'But look here, my friend: you've brought us up to a kind of Pisgah; I would rather go down into that land of Gilead, and see what the farm-houses are like.'

'Ay, but I brought ye here because it's about the best place for giving ye an idea of the marches,' said the man, imper-

turbably, for he knew his own business better than the stranger. 'Do ye see the burn away over there beyond the farm-house?'

'Yes, yes.'

'Well, that's the Balnavrain march right up to the top; and then the Duchess runs all along the sky-line yonder—to the black scaur.'

'You don't say!' observed Mr. Hodson. 'I never heard of a Duchess doing anything so extraordinary.'

'But we march with the Duchess,' said the other, a little bewildered.

'That's a little more decorous, anyway. Well, now I suppose we can make all that out on the Ordnance Survey map when we get back to the hotel. I'm for getting down into the valley—to have a look around; I take it that if I lived here I shouldn't spend all the time on a mountain-top.'

Well, the long and the short of it was that, after having had two or three hours of laborious and diligent tramping and inspection and questioning and explanation, and after having been entertained with a comfortable meal of oat-cake and hot broth and boiled beef at a hospitable farm-house, they set out again on their cold drive back to the hotel, where a long business conversation went on all the evening, during dinner and after dinner. It was very curious how each of these three brought this or that objection to the place—as if bound to do so; and how the fascination of the mere site of it had so clearly captivated them none the less. Of course, nothing conclusive was said or done that night; but, despite these deprecatory pleas, there was a kind of tacit and general admission that Balnavrain, with proper supervision and attention to the possibilities offered by its different altitudes, might be made into a very admirable little estate, with a dwelling-house on it second in point of situation to none on the whole western seaboard of the Highlands.

'Ronald,' said Mr. Hodson, that evening, when Mr. Carmichael had gone off to bed (he was making for the south early in the morning), 'we have had some hard days' work; why should we let Loch Naver lie idle? I suppose we could drive from here somehow? Let us start off to-morrow; and we'll have a week's salmon-fishing.'

'To Inver-Mudal?' he said—and he turned quite pale.

'Yes, yes, why not?' Mr. Hodson answered. But he had noticed that strange look that had come across the younger man's face; and he attributed it to a wrong cause. 'Oh, it will not

take up so much of your time,' he continued. 'Mr. Weems declares you must have your certificate as a matter of course. And as for expenses—the present arrangement must go on, naturally, until you get back to Glasgow. What is a week, man? Indeed, I will take no denial.'

And Ronald could not answer. To Inver-Mudal?—to meet the girl whom he dared not acknowledge to be his wife?—and with his future as hopelessly uncertain as ever. Once or twice he was almost driven to make a confession to this stranger, who seemed so frankly interested in him and his affairs; but no; he could not do that; and he went to bed wondering with what strange look in her eyes Meenie would find him in Inver-Mudal—if he found it impossible to resist the temptation of being once more within sight of her, and within hearing of the sound of her voice.

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## CHAPTER XLVII.

### A PLEDGE REDEEMED.

MR. HODSON could by no means get to understand the half-expressed reluctance, the trepidation almost, with which Ronald seemed to regard this visit to Inver-Mudal. It was not a matter of time; for his studies for the examination were practically over. It was not a matter of expense; for he was being paid a guinea a day. It was not debt; on that point Mr. Hodson had satisfied himself by a few plain questions; and he knew to a sovereign what sum Ronald had still in the bank. Nor could he believe, after the quite unusual terms in which Lord Ailine had written about the young man's conduct and character, that Ronald was likely to have done anything to cause him to fear a meeting with his former friends. And so, having some little experience of the world, he guessed that there was probably a girl in the case; and discreetly held his peace.

But little indeed was he prepared for the revelation that was soon to be made. On the afternoon of one of these cold February days they were driving northward along Strath Terry. A sprinkling of snow had fallen in the morning; the horses' hoofs and the wheels of the waggonette made scarcely any sound in this prevailing silence. They had come in sight of Loch Naver; and the long sheet of water looked quite black amid the white undulations of the woods and the moorland and the low-lying hills.

Now at this point the road leading down to the village makes a sudden turn ; and they were just cutting round the corner when Ronald, who had been anxiously looking forward, caught sight of that that most he longed and that most he feared to see. It was Meenie herself—she was walking by the side of the way, carrying some little parcel in her hand ; and they had come upon her quite unexpectedly, and noiselessly beside ; and what might she not betray in this moment of sudden alarm ? He gripped the driver's arm, thinking he might stop the horses ; but it was now too late for that. They were close to her ; she heard the patter of horses' hoofs ; she looked up, startled ; and the next moment—when she saw Ronald there—she had uttered a quick, sharp cry, and had staggered back a step or so, until in her fright she caught at the wire fence behind her. She did not fall ; but her face was as white as the snow around her ; and when he leapt from the wagonette, and seized her by both wrists, so as to hold her there, she could only say, ' Ronald, Ronald,' and could seek for no explanation of this strange arrival. But he held her tight and firm ; and with a wave of his hand he bade the driver drive on and leave them. And Mr. Hodson lowered his eyes, thinking that he had seen enough ; but he formally raised his hat, all the same ; and as he was being driven on to the inn, he returned to his surmise that there was a girl in the case—only who could have imagined that it was the doctor's daughter ?

Nor was there a single word said about this tell-tale meeting when Ronald came along to the inn, some few minutes thereafter. He seemed a little pre-occupied, that was all. He rather avoided the stormy welcome that greeted him everywhere ; and appeared to be wholly bent on getting the preparations pushed forward for the fishing of the next day. Of course everything had to be arranged ; for they had had no thought of coming to Inver-Mudal when they sailed from Glasgow ; there was not even a boat on the loch, nor a single gillie engaged.

But later on that evening, when the short winter day had departed, and the blackness of night lay over the land, Ronald stole away from the inn, and went stealthily down through the fields till he found himself by the side of the river. Of course, there was nothing visible ; had he not known every foot of the ground, he dared not have come this way ; but onward he went like a ghost through the dark until he finally gained the bridge, and there he paused, and listened. ' Meenie ! ' he said, in a kind of whisper ; but there was no reply. And so he groped his way

to the stone dyke by the side of the road, and sate down there, and waited.

This was not how he had looked forward to meeting Meenie again. Many a time he had pictured that to himself—his getting back to Inver-Mudal after the long separation—the secret summons—and Meenie coming silently out from the little cottage to join him. But always the night was a moonlight night; and the wide heavens calm and clear; and Loch Naver rippling in silver under the dusky shadows of Ben Clebrig. Why, he had already written out that summons; and he had sent it to Meenie; and no doubt she had read it over to herself more than once; and wondered when the happy time was to be. The night that he had looked forward to was more like a night for a lover's meeting: this was the message he had sent her—

*O white's the moon upon the loch,  
And black the bushes on the brae,  
And red the light in your window-pane:*

*When will ye come away,*

*Meenie,*

*When will ye come away?*

*I'll wrap ye round and keep ye warm,  
For mony a secret we've to tell,  
And ne'er a sound will hinder us  
Down in yon hidden dell,*

*Meenie,*

*Down in yon hidden dell.*

*O see the moon is sailing on  
Through fleecy clouds across the skies,  
But fairer far the light that I know,  
The love-light in your eyes,*

*Meenie,*

*The love-light in your eyes.*

*O haste and haste; the night is sweet,  
But sweeter far what I would hear;  
And I have a secret to tell to you,*

*A whisper in your ear,*

*Meenie,*

*A whisper in your ear.*

But here was a bitter cold winter night; and Meenie would have to come through the snow; and dark as pitch it was—he would have to guess at the love-light in her eyes, so cruelly dense was this blackness all around.

Then his quick ear detected a faint sound in the distance—a hushed footfall on the snow; and that came nearer and nearer; he went out to the middle of the road.

‘Is that you, Meenie?’

The answer was a whisper—

‘Ronald!’

And like a ghost she came to him through the dark; but indeed this was no ghost at all that he caught to him and that clung to him, for if her cheeks were cold her breath was warm about his face, and her lips were warm, and her ungloved hands that were round his neck were warm, and all the furry wrappings that she wore could not quite conceal the joyful beating of her heart.

‘Oh, Ronald—Ronald—you nearly killed me with the fright—I thought something dreadful had happened—that you had come back without any warning—and now you say instead that it’s good news—oh, let it be good news, Ronald—let it be good news—if you only knew how I have been thinking and thinking—and crying sometimes—through the long days and the long nights—let it be good news that you have brought with you, Ronald!’

‘Well, lass’ (but this was said after some little time; for he had other things to say to her with which we have no concern here), ‘it may be good news; but it’s pretty much guess-work; and maybe I’m building up something on my own conceit, that will have a sudden fall, and serve me right. And then even at the best I hardly see—’

‘But, Ronald, you said it was good news!’ And then she altered her tone. ‘Ah, but I don’t care! I don’t care at all when you are here. It is only when you are away that my heart is like lead all the long day; and at night I lie and think that everything is against us—and such a long time to wait—and perhaps my people finding out—but what is it, Ronald, you had to tell me?’

‘Well, now, Meenie,’ said he.

‘But that is not my name—to you,’ said she; for indeed she scarce knew what she said, and was all trembling, and excited, and clinging to him—there, in the dark, amid the wild waste of the snow.

‘Love-Meenie and Rose-Meenie, all in one,’ said he, ‘listen, and I’ll tell you now what maybe lies before us. Maybe, it is, and that only; I think this unexpected coming to see you may have put me off my head a bit; but if it’s all a mistake—well, we

are no worse off than we were before. And this is what it is now: do you remember my telling you that Mr. Hodson had often been talking of buying an estate in the Highlands?—well, he has just been looking at one—it's over there on the Ross-shire coast—and it's that has brought us to the Highlands just now, for he would have me come and look at it along with him. And what would you think if he made me the factor of it? Well, maybe I'm daft to think of such a thing; but he has been talking and talking in a way I cannot understand unless some plan of that kind is in his head; ay, and he has been making inquiries about me, as I hear; and not making much of the forestry certificate, as to whether I get it or no; but rather, as I should guess, thinking about putting me on this Balnavrain place as soon as it becomes his own. Ay, ay, sweetheart; that would be a fine thing for me, to be in a position just like that of Mr. Crawford—though on a small scale; and who could prevent my coming to claim my good wife then, and declaring her as mine before all the world?'

'Yes, yes, Ronald,' she said, eagerly, 'but why do you talk like that? Why do you speak as if there was trouble? Surely he will make you factor! It was he that asked you to go away to Glasgow; he always was your friend; if he buys the estate, who else could he get to manage it as well?'

'But there's another thing, sweetheart,' said he, rather hopelessly. 'He spoke about it yesterday. Indeed, he put it plain enough. He asked me fairly whether, supposing somebody was to offer me the management of an estate, I could get guarantees—securities for my honesty, in fact; and he even mentioned the sum that would be needed. Well, well, it's beyond me, my girl—where could I find two people to stand surety for me at 500*l.* apiece?'

She uttered a little cry, and clung closer to him.

'Ronald—Ronald—surely you will not miss such a chance for that—it is a matter of form, isn't it?—and some one—'

'But who do I know that has got 500*l.*, and that I could ask?' said he. 'Ay, and two of them. Maybe Lord Ailine might be one—he was always a good friend to me—but two of them—two of them—well, well, good lass, if it has all got to go, we must wait for some other chance.'

'Yes,' said Meenie, bitterly, 'and this American—he calls himself a friend of yours too—and he wants guarantees for your honesty!'

'It's the usual thing, as he said himself,' Ronald said. 'But don't be downhearted, my dear. Hopes and disappointments come to every one, and we must meet them like the rest. The world has

always something for us—even these few minutes—with your cheeks grown warm again—and the scent of your hair—ay, and your heart as gentle as ever—’

But she was crying a little.

‘Ronald—surely—it is not possible this chance should be so near us—and then to be taken away. And can’t I do something? I know the Glengask people will be angry—but—but I would write to Lady Stuart—or if I could only go to her, that would be better—it would be between woman and woman, and surely she would not refuse when she knew how we were placed—and—and it would be something for me to do—for you know you’ve married a pauper bride, Ronald—and I bring you nothing—when even a farmer’s daughter would have her store of napery and a chest of drawers and all that—but couldn’t I do this, Ronald?—I would go and see Lady Stuart—she could not refuse me!’

He laughed lightly; and his hands were clasped round the soft brown hair.

‘No, no, no, sweetheart; things will have come to a pretty pass before I would have you exposed to any humiliation of that sort. And why should you be downhearted? The world is young for both of us. Oh, don’t you be afraid; a man that can use his ten fingers and is willing to work will tumble into something sooner or later; and what is the use of being lovers if we are not to have our constancy tried? No, no; you keep a brave heart; if this chance has to be given up, we’ll fall in with another; and maybe it will be all the more welcome that we have had to wait a little while for it.’

‘A little while, Ronald?’ said she.

He strove to cheer her and re-assure her still further; although, indeed, there was not much time for that; for he had been commanded to dine with Mr. Hodson at half-past seven; and he knew better than to keep the man who might possibly be his master waiting for dinner. And presently Meenie and he were going quietly along the snow-hushed road; and he bade her good-bye—many and many times repeated—near the little garden-gate; and then made his way back to the inn. He had just time to brush his hair and smarten himself up a bit when the pretty Nelly—who seemed to be a little more friendly and indulgent towards him than in former days—came to say that she had taken the soup into the parlour, and that the gentleman was waiting.

Now Mr. Hodson was an astute person; and he suspected something, and was anxious to know more; but he was not so ill-

advised as to begin with direct questions. For one thing, there was still a great deal to be talked over about the Balnavrain estate—which he had almost decided on purchasing; and, amongst other matters, Ronald was asked whether the overseer of such a place would consider 400*l.* a year a sufficient salary, if a plainly and comfortably built house were thrown in; and also whether, in ordinary circumstances, there would be any difficulty about a young fellow obtaining two sureties to be responsible for him. From that it was a long way round to the doctor's daughter; but Mr. Hodson arrived there in time; for he had brought for her a present from his own daughter; and he seemed inclined to talk in a friendly way about the young lady. And at last he got the whole story. Once started, Ronald spoke frankly enough. He confessed to his day-dreams about one so far superior to him in station; he described his going away to Glasgow; his loneliness and despair there; his falling among evil companions and his drinking; the message of the white heather; his pulling himself up; and Meenie's sudden resolve and heroic self-surrender. The private marriage, too—yes, he heard the whole story from beginning to end; and the more he heard, the more his mind was busy; though he was a quiet kind of person, and the recital did not seem to move him in any way whatever.

And yet it may be doubted whether, in all the county of Sutherland, or in all the realm of England, there was any happier man that night than Mr. Josiah Hodson. For here was something entirely after his own heart. His pet hobby was playing the part of a small beneficent Providence; and he had already befriended Ronald, and was greatly interested in him; moreover, had he not promised his daughter, when she lay apparently very near to death, that Ronald should be looked after? But surely he had never looked forward to any such opportunity as this! And then the girl was so pretty—that, also, was something. His heart warmed to the occasion; dinner being over, they drew their chairs towards the big fireplace where the peats were blazing cheerfully; Ronald was bidden to light his pipe; and then the American—in a quiet, indifferent, sententious way, as if he were talking of some quite abstract and unimportant matter—made his proposal.

'Well, now, Ronald,' said he, as he stirred up some of the peats with his foot, 'you seemed to think that 400*l.* a year and a house thrown in was good enough for the overseer of that Balnavrain place. I don't know what your intentions are; but if you like to take that situation, it's yours.'

Ronald looked startled—but only for a moment.

‘I thank ye, sir; I thank ye,’ he said, with rather a downcast face. ‘I will not say I had no suspicion ye were thinking of some such kindness; and I thank ye—most heartily I thank ye. But it’s beyond me. I could not get the securities.’

‘Well, now, as to that,’ the American said, after a moment’s consideration, ‘I am willing to take one security—I mean for the whole amount; and I want to name the person myself. If Miss Douglas will go bail for you—or Mrs. Strang, I suppose I should call her—then there is no more to be said. Ronald, my good fellow, if the place is worth your while, take it; it’s yours.’

A kind of flash of joy and gratitude leapt to the younger man’s eyes; but all he could manage to say was—

‘If I could only tell *her*!’

‘Well, now, as to that again,’ said Mr. Hodson, rising slowly, and standing with his back to the fire, ‘I have got to take along that present from my daughter—to-morrow morning would be best; and I could give her the information, if you wished. But I’ll tell you what would be still better, my friend: you just let me settle this little affair with the old people—with the mamma, as I understand. I’m not much of a talkist; but if you give me permission I’ll have a try; I think we might come to some kind of a reasonable understanding, if she doesn’t flatten me with her swell relations. Why, yes, I think I can talk sense to her. I don’t want to see the girl kept in that position; your Scotch ways—well, we haven’t got any old ballads in my country, and we like to have our marriages fair and square and aboveboard: now let me tell the old lady the whole story, and try to make it up with her. She can’t scold my head off.’

And by this time he was walking up and down the room; and he continued—

‘No; I shall go round to-morrow afternoon, when we come back from the fishing. And look here, Ronald; this is what I want you to do; you must get the other boat down to the lake—and you will go in that one—and get another lad or two—I will pay them anything they want. I can’t have my overseer acting as gillie, don’t you see—if I am going to talk with his mother-in-law; you must get out the other boat; and if you catch a salmon or two, just you send them along to the doctor, with your compliments—do you hear, your compliments, not mine. Now—’

‘And I have not a word of thanks!’ Ronald exclaimed. ‘My head is just bewildered—’

'Say, now,' the American continued quietly—in fact, he seemed to be considering his finger-nails more than anything else, as he walked up and down the room—'say, now, what do you think the doctor's income amounts to in the year? Not much? Two hundred pounds, with all expenses paid?'

'I really don't know,' Ronald said—not understanding the drift of this question.

'Not three hundred, anyway?'

'I'm sure I don't know.'

'Ah. Well, now, I've got to talk to that old lady to-morrow about the prospects of her son-in-law—though she don't know she has got one,' Mr. Hodson was saying—half to himself, as it were. 'I suppose she'll jump on me when I begin. But there's one thing. If I can't convince her with four hundred a year, I'll try her with five—and Carry shall kiss me the difference.'

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## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### THE FACTOR OF BALNAVRAIN.

WELL, now, some couple of months or so thereafter, this same Miss Carry was one of a party of four—all Americans—who set out from Lairg station to drive to Inver-Mudal; and very comfortable and content with each other they seemed to be when they were ensconced in the big waggonette. For a convalescent, indeed, Miss Hodson appeared to be in excellent spirits; but there may have been reasons for that; for she had recently become engaged; and her betrothed, to mark that joyful circumstance, had left for Europe with her; and it was his first trip to English shores; and more especially it was his first trip to the Highlands of Scotland; and very proud was she of her self-imposed office of chaperon and expounder and guide. Truth to tell, the long and lank editor found that in many respects he had fallen upon troublous times; for not only was he expected to be profoundly interested in historical matters about which he did not care a red cent, and to accept any and every inconvenience and discomfort as if it were a special blessing from on high, and to be ready at all moments to admire mountains and glens and lakes when he would rather have been talking of something more personal to Miss Carry and himself, but also—and this was the cruellest wrong of all—he had to listen to continued praises of Ronald Strang that now and again sounded

suspiciously like taunts. And on such occasions he was puzzled by the very audacity of her eyes. She regarded him boldly—as if to challenge him to say that she did not mean every word she uttered; and he dared not quarrel with her, or dispute; though sometimes he had his own opinion as to whether those pretty soft dark eyes were quite so innocent and simple and straightforward as they pretended to be.

‘Ah,’ said she, as they were now driving away from the village into the wide, wild moorland, ‘ah, when you see Ronald, you will see a man.’

She had her eyes fixed on him.

‘I suppose they don’t grow that kind of a thing in our country,’ he answered, meekly.

‘I mean,’ she said, with a touch of pride, ‘I mean a man who is not ashamed to be courteous to women—a man who knows how to show proper respect to women.’

‘Why, yes, I’ll allow you won’t find that quality in an American,’ he said, with a subtle sarcasm that escaped her, for she was too obviously bent on mischief.

‘And about the apology, now?’

‘What apology?’

‘For your having published an insulting article about Ronald, to be sure. Of course you will have to apologise to him, before this very day is over.’

‘I will do anything else you like,’ the long editor said, with much complaisance. ‘I will fall in love with the young bride, if you like. Or I’ll tell lies about the weight of the salmon when I get back home. But an apology? Seems to me a man making an apology looks about as foolish as a woman throwing a stone: I don’t see my way to that. Besides, where does the need of it come in, anyhow? You never read the article. It was very complimentary, as I think; yes, it was so; a whole column and more about a Scotch gamekeeper—’

‘A Scotch gamekeeper!’ Miss Carry said, proudly. ‘Well, now, just you listen to me. Ronald knows nothing at all about this article; if he did, he would only laugh at it; but he never heard of it; and it’s not to be spoken of here. But I mean to speak of it, by and by. I mean to speak of it, when I make the acquaintance of—what’s his distinguished name?’

But here Miss Kerfoot—who, with her married sister, occupied the other side of the waggonette—broke in.

‘You two quarrelling again!’ And then she sighed. ‘But

what is the good of a drive, anyway, when we haven't got Doctor Tom and his banjo ?'

'A banjo—in Strath Terry ?' Miss Carry cried. 'Do you mean to say you would like to hear a banjo tinkle-tinkling in a country like this ?'

'Yes, my dyaw,' said Miss Kerfoot, coolly : she had been making some studies in English pronunciation, and was getting on pretty well.

'I suppose you can't imagine how Adam passed the time without one in the Garden of Eden—wanted to play to Eve on the moonlight nights—a cake-walk, I suppose—pumpkin-pie—why, I wonder what's the use of bringing you to Europe.'

For answer Miss Kerfoot began to hum to herself—but with the words sounding clearly enough—

*'I'se gwine back to Dixie,  
I'se gwine back to Dixie,  
I'se gwine where the orange blossoms grow ;  
O, I'd rather be in Dixie,  
I'd rather be in Dixie,  
For travelling in the Highlands is so——'*

But here remorse of conscience smote her ; and she seized Carry's hand.

'No, I won't say it—you poor, weak, invalid thing. And were they worrying you about the Highlands, and the slow trains, and the stuffy omnibus at Lairg ? Well, they shan't say anything more to you—that they shan't ; and you are to have everything your own way ; and I'm going to fall in love with Ronald, just to keep you company.'

But alas ! when they did eventually get to Inver-Mudal, there was no Ronald to be found there. Mr. Murray was there, and Mrs. Murray, and the yellow-haired Nelly ; and the travellers were told that luncheon was awaiting them ; and also that Mr. Hodson had had the second boat put in readiness, lest any of them should care to try the fishing in the afternoon.

'But where is Ronald ?' said Miss Carry, not in the least concealing her vexation

'Don't cry, poor thing,' Miss Kerfoot whispered to her. 'It shall have its Ronald !'

'Oh, don't bother !' she said, angrily. 'Mr. Murray, where is Ronald ? Is he with my father on the loch ?'

'No, no ; it's the two gillies that's with Mr. Hodson on the loch,' the innkeeper said, 'And do not you know, Miss, that

Ronald is not here at ahl now; he is away at the place in Ross-shire.'

'Oh, yes, I know that well enough,' she said, 'but my father wrote that he was coming over to see us for a day or two; and he was to be here this morning—and his wife as well. But it is of no consequence. I suppose we had better go in and have lunch now.'

Miss Kerfoot was covertly laughing. But there was a young lad there called Johnnie—a shy lad he was, and he was standing apart from the others, and thus it was that he could see along the road leading down to the Mudal bridge. Something in that direction attracted Johnnie's attention; he came over and said a word or two to Mr. Murray; the innkeeper went to the gable of the house, so that he could get a look up Tongue way, and then he said—

'Oh, yes, I think that will be Ronald.'

'Don't you hear?' said Miss Kerfoot, who was following the others into the inn. 'They say that Ronald is coming right now.'

Miss Carry turned at once, and went to where the innkeeper was standing. Away along there, and just coming over the bridge, was a dog-cart, with two figures in it. She watched it. By and by it was pulled up in front of the doctor's cottage; she guessed that that was Meenie who got down from the vehicle and went into the house; no doubt this was Ronald who was now bringing the dog-cart along to the inn. And then the others were summoned; and presently Ronald had arrived and was being introduced to them; and Miss Carry had forgotten all her impatience, for he looked just as handsome, and good-natured, and modest-eyed as ever; and it was very clear that Miss Kerfoot was much impressed with the frankness and simplicity of his manner; and the editor strove to be particularly civil; and Mrs. Lalor regarded the newcomer with an obviously approving eye. For they all had heard the story; and they were interested in him, and in his young wife; besides, they did not wish to wound the feelings of this poor invalid creature—and they knew what she thought of Ronald.

And how was he to answer all at once these hundred questions about the Ross-shire place, and the house that was building for them, and the farm where he and his wife were staying?

'Come in and have lunch with us, Ronald,' said Miss Carry, in her usual frank way, 'and then you will tell us all about it. We were just going in; and it's on the table.'

'I cannot do that very well, I thank ye,' said he, 'for I have to go back to the doctor's as soon as I have seen the mare looked after—'

'Oh, but I thought you were coming down to the loch with us!' she said, with very evident disappointment.

'Yes, yes, to be sure!' said he. 'I'll be back in a quarter of an hour at the furthest; and then I'll take one of the lads with me and we'll have the other boat got out as well.'

'But you don't understand, Ronald,' she said, quickly. 'The other boat is there—ready—and two gillies, and rods, and everything. I only want you to come with us for luck; there's always good luck when you are in the boat. Ah, do you know what they did to me on Lake George?'

'Indeed, I was sorry to hear of it, Miss,' said he, gravely.

'Miss!' she repeated, with a kind of reproach; but she could not keep the others waiting any longer; and so there was an appointment made that they were all to meet at the loch-side in half an hour; and she and her friends went into the house.

When it came to setting out, however, Mrs. Lalor begged to be excused; she was a little bit tired, she said, and would go and lie down. So the other three went by themselves; and when they got down to the loch, they not only found that Ronald was there awaiting them, but also that Mr. Hodson had reeled up his lines and come ashore to welcome them. Of course that was the sole reason. At the same time the gillies had got out three remarkably handsome salmon and put them on the grass; and that was the display that met the eyes of the strangers when they drew near. Mr. Hodson was not proud; but he admitted that they were good-looking fish. Yes; it was a fair morning's work. But there were plenty more where these came from, he said, encouragingly; they'd better begin.

Whereupon Miss Carry said promptly—

'Come along, Em. Mr. Huysen, will you go with pappa, when he is ready? And Ronald will come with us, to give us good luck at the start.'

Miss Kerfoot said nothing, but did as she was bid; she merely cast a glance at Mr. Huysen as they were leaving; and her eyes were demure.

However, if she considered this manœuvre—as doubtless she did—a piece of mere wilful and perverse coquetry on the part of her friend, she was entirely mistaken. It simply never would have entered Miss Carry's head that Ronald should have gone into any other person's boat, so long as she was there—nor would it have entered his head either. But besides that, she had brought something for him; and she wished to have time to show it to

him; and so, when the boat was well away from the shore, and when he had put out both the lines, she asked him to be so kind as to undo the long case lying there, and to put the rod together, and say what he thought of it. It was a salmon-rod, she explained; of American make; she had heard they were considered rather superior articles; and if he approved of this one, she begged that he would keep it.

He looked up with a little surprise.

'Ye are just too kind,' said he. 'There's that beautiful rug that you sent to my wife, now—'

'But isn't it useful?' she said, in her quick, frank way. 'Isn't it comfortable? When you were coming along this morning, didn't she find it comfortable?'

'Bless me!' he cried. 'Do ye think she would put a beautiful thing like that into a dog-cart to be splashed with mud, and soiled with one's boots? No, no; it's put over an easy-chair at the doctor's, until we get a house of our own, and proud she is of it, as she ought to be.'

And proud was he, too, of this beautiful rod—if he declared that it was far too fine for this coarse trolling work; and Miss Kerfoot arrived at the impression that if he could not make pretty speeches of thanks, there was that in his manner that showed he was not ungrateful.

Nor was Miss Carry's faith in Ronald's good luck belied; for they had not been more than twenty minutes out on the loch when they had got hold of something; and at once she rose superior to the excitement of the gillies, and to the consternation of her American friend. Perhaps she was showing off a little; at all events, she seemed quite cool and collected, as if this strain on the rod, and the occasional long scream of the reel were a usual kind of thing; and Ronald looked on in quiet composure, believing that his pupil was best left alone. But alas! alas! for that long illness. The fish was a heavy one, and a game fighter; Miss Carry's arms were weaker than she had thought; at the end of about a quarter of an hour—during which time the salmon had been plunging, and boring, and springing, and making long rushes in every conceivable manner—she began to feel the strain. But she was a brave lass; as long as ever she could stand upright, she held on; then she said, rather faintly—

'Ronald!'

'Take the rod,' she said, 'the fish isn't played out; but I am.'

'What's the matter?' said he, in great alarm, as she sank on to the seat,

'Oh, nothing, nothing,' she said, though she was a little pale. 'Give Em the rod—give Miss Kerfoot the rod—quick, Em, get up and land your first salmon—'

'Oh, my gracious, no! I should die of fright!' was the immediate answer.

But Ronald had no intention of allowing Miss Carry's salmon to be handed over to anyone else. He turned to the gillies.

'Is there not a drop of whisky in the boat? Quick, lads, if you have such a thing—quick, quick!—'

They handed him a small green bottle; but she shrank from it.

'The taste is too horrid for anything,' she said. 'But I will have another try. Stand by me, Ronald; and mind I don't fall overboard.'

She got hold of the rod again; he held her right arm—but only to steady her.

'Carry—Carry!' her friend said, anxiously. 'I wish you'd leave it alone. Remember, you've been ill—it's too much for you—oh, I wish the thing would go away!'

'I mean to wave the banner over this beast, if I die for it,' Miss Carry said, under her breath; and Ronald laughed—for that was more of his way of thinking.

'We'll have him, sure enough,' he said. 'Ay, and a fine fish, too, that I know.'

'Oh, Ronald!' she cried.

For there was a sudden and helpless slackening of the line. But she had experience enough to reel up hard; and presently it appeared that the salmon was there—very much there, in fact, for now it began to go through some performances—within five-and-twenty yards of the boat—that nearly frightened Miss Kerfoot out of her wits. And then these cantrips moderated slowly down; the line was got in shorter; Ronald, still steadying Miss Carry's right arm with his left hand, got hold of the clip in the other; and the young lady who was the spectator of all this manœuvring began rather to draw away in fear, as that large white gleaming thing showed nearer and nearer the boat. Nay, she uttered a quick cry of alarm when a sudden dive of the steel hook brought out of the water a huge silvery creature that the next moment was in the bottom of the boat; and then she found that Carry had sank down beside her, pretty well exhausted, but immensely proud; and that the gillies were laughing and vociferous and excited over the capture; and Ronald calmly getting out his scale-weight from his pocket. The other boat was just then passing.

‘A good one?’ Mr. Hodson called out.

‘Just over sixteen pounds, sir.’

‘Well done. But leave us one or two; don’t take them all.’

Miss Carry paid no heed. She was far too much exhausted; but pleased and satisfied, also, that she had been able to see this fight to the end. And she remembered enough of the customs of the country to ask the two gillies to take a dram—though it had to come from their own bottle; she said she would see that was replenished when they got back to the inn.

It was a beautiful clear evening as they all of them—the fishing having been given up for the day—walked away through the meadows, and up into the road, and so on to the little hamlet; the western sky was shining in silver-grey and lemon and saffron; and there was a soft sweet feeling almost as of summer in the air, though the year was yet young. They had got six fish all told; that is to say, Mr. Hodson’s boat had got one more in the afternoon; while Miss Carry had managed to pick up a small thing of eight pounds or so just as they were leaving off. The fact was, they did not care to prosecute the fishing till the last moment; for there was to be a little kind of a dinner-celebration that evening; and no doubt some of them wanted to make themselves as smart as possible—though the possibilities, as a rule, don’t go very far in the case of a fishing-party in a Highland inn—all to pay due honour to the bride.

And surely if ever Meenie could lay claim to the title of Rose-Meenie it was on this evening when she came among these stranger folk—who were aware of her story, if not a word was said or hinted of it—and found all the women be-petting her. And Mrs. Douglas was there, radiant in silk and ribbons, if somewhat austere in manner; and the big good-natured doctor was there, full to overflowing with jests and quips and occult Scotch stories; and Mr. and Mrs. Murray had done their very best for the decoration of the dining-room—though Sutherlandshire in April is far from being Florida. And perhaps, too, Miss Carry was a little paid out when she saw the perfectly servile adulation which Mr. J. C. Huysen (who had a sensitive heart, according to the young men of the *N. Y. Sun*) laid at the feet of the pretty young bride; though Mr. Hodson rather interfered with that, claiming Mrs. Strang as his own. Of course, Miss Kerfoot was rather downhearted, because of the absence of her Tom and his banjo; but Ronald had promised her she should kill a salmon on the morrow; and that comforted her a little. Mrs. Lalor had recovered, and was chiefly an amused

spectator ; there was a good deal of human nature about ; and she had eyes.

Altogether it was a pleasant enough evening ; for, although the Americans and the Scotch are the two nations out of all the world that are the most madly given to after-dinner speech-making, nothing of the kind was attempted : Mr. Hodson merely raised his glass and gave 'The Bride!' and Ronald said a few manly and sensible words in reply. Even Mrs. Douglas so far forgot the majesty of Glengask and Orosay as to become quite complaisant ; perhaps she reflected that it was, after all, chiefly through the kindness of these people that her daughter and her daughter's husband had been placed in a comfortable and assured position.

Ronald and Meenie had scarcely had time as yet to cease from being lovers ; and so it was that on this same night he presented her with two or three more of those rhymes that sometimes he still wrote about her when the fancy seized him. In fact, he had written these verses as he sat on the deck of the big screw steamer, when she was slowly steaming up the Raasay Sound.

*O what's the sweetest thing there is  
In all the wide, wide world ?—  
A rose that hides its deepest scent  
In the petals closely curled ?*

*Or the honey that's in the clover ;  
Or the lark's song in the morn ;  
Or the wind that blows in summer  
Across the fields of corn ;*

*Or the dew that the queen of the fairies  
From her acorn-chalice sips ?  
Ah, no ; for sweeter and sweeter far  
Is a kiss from Meenie's lips !*

And Meenie was pleased—perhaps, indeed, she said as much and showed as much, when nobody was by ; but all the same she hid away the little fragment among a mass of similar secret treasures she possessed ; for she was a young wife now ; and fully conscious of the responsibilities of her position ; and well was she aware that it would never do for any one to imagine that nonsense of that kind was allowed to interfere with the important public duties of the factor of Balnavrain.

THE END.

## *The True Theory of the Preface:*

*A Confidential Communication to all Makers of Books.*<sup>1</sup>

APPARENTLY the true theory of the Preface is apprehended by very few of those who are, by trade, makers of books—to use Carlyle's characterization of his own calling. Mr. Matthew Arnold, indeed, master of all literary arts, is highly skilful in the use of the Preface, which, in his hands, serves to drive home the bolt of his argument, and to rivet it firmly on the other side. Those who have read one of Mr. Arnold's prefaces know what to expect, and fall to, with increased appetite, on the book itself. But not many men may wield the weapons of Mr. Arnold, and very few, as I have said already, are skilled in the use of the Preface. Many, ignorant of its utility, choose to ignore it altogether. More, accepting it as a necessary evil, acquit themselves of it in the most perfunctory fashion. There is a slight survival of the tradition which made the appeal to the Gentle Reader a fit and proper custom. But nowadays the appeal is useless, and the Gentle Reader—oh, where is he? In the days when there was a Gentle Reader, there was no giant critic to appal the trembling author with his thunderous Fee-Fo-Fum. In the beginning, when printing was a new invention, it served for the multiplication of books alone; newspapers lagged long after; and it is only in the present century that the reading public began to allow that middleman, the critic, to taste and try before they buy. The Preface *in forma pauperis*, in which the author confessed his sinful publication, and implored forgiveness, urging, as his sole excuses, 'hunger and request of friends,' is now as much out of date and as antiquated in style as the fulsome dedication to a noble patron. The two lived together and died together about the time when the working man of letters moved out of his lodgings in Grub Street.

The Preface in which the writer takes a humorous view of his own work is a late device; it is capable of good results in the hands of a literary artist like Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson, who suggests in the pages which prepare us to enjoy his record of 'An

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1885. Brander Matthews.

Inland Voyage,' that in his Preface an author should stand afar off and look at his book affectionately, if he will, but dispassionately. 'It is best, in such circumstances,' he asserts, 'to represent a delicate shade of manner between humility and superiority, as if the book had been written by some one else, and you had merely run over it and inserted what was good.' Clever as this is, and characteristic and delightful as its humour is, I feel constrained to assert my belief that Mr. Stevenson is not standing on the solid ground of a sound theory. Mr. Stevenson is a writer of exceptional gifts, and he may venture on liberties which would be fatal to the rest of us: his example affords no safe rule for ordinary mortals. In the Preface a man must take himself seriously, for a Preface is a very serious thing. It cannot be denied that the humorous attitude is much wiser than the self-deprecatory and the apologetic, which are, unfortunately, far more common. A humourist has, at least, a wholesome belief in himself, and he can hide his doubting sorrow with a smile; whereas the plaintive author, who confesses his weakness with tears in his eyes, is a sorry spectacle, that no man may respect.

The cause of the apologetic Preface is obvious enough. Although printed at the beginning of the book, the Preface is the last thing written. When the long labour of composition is over at last, and the intense strain is relaxed suddenly, then it is that the author sits down to his Preface. There is a cooling of the enthusiasm which has carried him through his work: there is often, indeed, a violent reaction; and it is at this moment of depression and despondency, when the author is a prey to dread doubt about his book and about himself, that the Preface has to be composed. Just then the author sometimes wonders whether it is not his duty to throw what he has written into the fire, and so rid the world of a misconceived and misshapen abortion. Rarely is this feeling, acute as it is, and painful, quite strong enough to make the author actually cast his MS. into the grate—never until, like Pendennis, he has made sure that the fire is out. But his morbidity of spirit and his self-distrust find vent in the Preface. Not unfrequently is the Preface worded like a last dying speech and confession. As M. Octave Uzanne says in the lively Preface to his lively little book called the '*Caprices d'un Bibliophile*,' 'the Preface is the salutation to the reader, and too often, alas! the terrible salutation of the gladiators to Cæsar—*Morituri te salutant!*'

This is rank heresy: and all such heretics should be burnt at

the stake, or at least they should have their books burnt in the market-place by the common hangman. The Preface is not the fit time and occasion for the author to exhale his complaints, to make confession of his sins, and to promise to do penance. It is perhaps not too much to say that the Preface is the most important part of a book, except the Index. Anybody can write a book, such as it is, but only a gifted man, or a man trained in the art, can write a Preface, such as it ought to be.

In the Preface the author must put his best foot foremost, and this is often the *premier pas qui coûte*. A Preface should be appetising, alluring, enticing. As a battle well joined is half won, as a work well begun is half done, so a book with a good Preface is half way on the high road to success. In the Preface the author offers his first-fruits and pours his libation. In the Preface the author may set a sample of his text as in a show-window. In the Preface the author strikes the keynote of his work. Therefore must the good Preface set forth the supreme excellence of the book it should precede, as a brass band goes before a regiment. As delicately, and yet as unhesitatingly, as the composer knows how, the Preface should sound triumphant pæans of exultant self-praise. There is no need that a Preface should be long; it takes a large cart to carry a score of empty casks, almost worthless, while a ten-thousand-dollar diamond may go snugly in a waistcoat pocket. But a Preface must be strong enough to do its allotted work. Now its allotted work—and here we are laying bare the secret of the true theory of the Preface—is to furnish to the unwitting critic a syllabus or a skeleton of the criticism which you wish to have him write.

The thoughtless may declare that 'nobody reads a Preface;' but there could be no more fatal blunder. Perhaps that impalpable entity, the general reader, may skip it not infrequently; but that tangible terror, the critic, never fails to read the Preface, even when he reads no further. Now and again the general reader may dispense with the reading of the Preface, as legislative assemblies dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting, that they may the sooner get to the business in hand. The critic is a very different sort of person from the general reader, and it is meat and drink to him to read a Preface. The author should recognise this fact; he should accept the altered conditions of the Preface. Consider for a moment what the Preface was, what it is now, and what it should be. It was addressed to the reader, who read it rarely. It is now, as we have seen

above, anything or nothing, sometimes absent, often artless, seldom apt. It should be a private letter from the author to the critic indicating the lines upon which he (the author) would like him (the critic) to frame his opinion and to declare his judgment. A good Preface is like the trick modern magicians use, when, under pretence of giving us free choice, they force us to draw the card they have already determined upon. So if a book have a proper Preface, contrived with due art, the critic cannot choose but write about it as the author wishes. A master of the craft will blow his own horn in the Preface of his book so skilfully and so unobtrusively that only a faint echo shall linger in the ear of the critic, iterating and reiterating the *Leit-Motiv* of self-praise until the charmed reviewer repeats it unconsciously.

Of course it is not easy for a gentleman to praise himself publicly as he feels he deserves to be praised. The pleasantest and most profitable Preface for the beginner in book-making is the introduction by one of the acknowledged leaders of literature. Then, by a strange reversal of custom, it is the celebrity who waits at the door like an usher to declare the titles of the young man who is about to cross the threshold for the first time. Thus the young author has granted to him a passport by which he may gain admittance where else he might not enter. Jules Janin was a master-hand at the issuing of these introductory letters of credit; he was easy and good-natured, and rarely or never did he refuse a novice the alms of a Preface. Janin had the ear of the public, and he liked to lead the public by the ear. Perhaps, too, he liked the opportunity of using his high praise of the new comer slyly to deal a blow between the ribs or under the belt of some old favourite whose reputation came between him and the sun. He who makes the Preface to another's book stands on a vantage ground and is free from responsibility; he may classify under heads the things that he hates, and then in accordance with the precept and the practice of Donnybrook hit a head wherever he sees it. Truly a man may wish, 'O that mine enemy would let me write his Preface! Could I not damn with faint praise and stab with sharp insinuation?'—to use the labour-saving and much needed word thoughtlessly invented by the sable legislator of South Carolina.

The Preface by another hand is often a pleasant device for the display of international courtesy. Merimée introduced Turgenev to the Parisians. In the United States an English author may be presented to the public by an American celebrity, and in Great

Britain an American book may be published with a voucher of its orthodoxy signed by some dignitary of the Church. Thus the erudite Mr. George Augustus Sala prepared a Preface for an English reprint of a book of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes's. Thus Mr. E. C. Stedman wrote a graceful paper to precede the authorised American edition of Mr. Austin Dobson's delightful 'Vignettes in Rhyme.' The exalted friend of the author who provides the introduction, if he be but a true friend, may praise far more highly than even the wildest author would dare to praise himself. If he understands the obligation of his position and does his duty, he should blare the trumpet boldly and bang the big drum mightily, and bid the whole world walk up and see the show which is just about to begin. Even if the public be dull and laggard and refuse to be charmed, the author has at least the signal satisfaction for once in his life of hearing his effort properly appreciated at its exact value. If by any chance he is a truly modest man—a rare bird indeed, a white blackbird—he may have some slight qualms of conscience on seeing himself overpraised in the pages of his own book. But these qualms are subdued easily enough for the most part. 'I never saw an author in my life—saving perhaps one,' says the Autocrat whom Mr. Sala politely presented to the British public, 'that did not purr as audibly as a full-grown domestic cat on having his fur smoothed the right way by a skilful hand.'

In default of a friend speaking as one having authority, the author must perforce write his own Preface and declare his own surpassing virtues. The old-fashioned Preface, inscribed to the Gentle Reader of the vague and doubtful past, often failed to reach its address. The Preface of the new school, constructed according to the true theory, is intended solely for the critic. Now the critic is the very reverse of the Gentle Reader, and he must be addressed accordingly. He studies the Preface carefully to see what bits he can chip away to help build his own review. 'A good Preface is as essential to put the reader into good humour, as a good prologue to a play,' so the author of the 'Curiosities of Literature' tells us; but nowadays our plays have no prologues, and it is the critic whom the Preface must put into good humour. Now, the critic is not the ogre he is often represented; he is a man like ourselves, a man having to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, a man often overworked and often bound down to a distasteful task. He is quick to take a hint. For his benefit the Preface should fairly bristle with hints. The Preface should

insinuate adroitly that the book it precedes is—in the choice phrase of the advertisement—‘a felt want filled.’ This need not be done brutally and nakedly. On the contrary, it is better to lead the mind of the critic by easy steps. Dwell on the importance of the subject, and declare that in the present work it has been regarded for the first time from a new and particular point of view. Point out, modestly but firmly, the special advantages which the author has enjoyed, and which make him an authority on the subject. Casually let drop, in quotation marks, a few words of high praise once addressed to the author by a great man, now no longer with us, and trust that you have done all in your power to merit such gratifying encomiums. You may even venture to intimate that although you cannot expect the profane vulgar to see the transcendent merit of your work, yet the favoured few of keener insight will recognise it at once: flattery is a legal tender without Act of Parliament, and the critic accepts it as readily, perhaps, as the author. The critic is only a fellow human being after all, and like the rest of our fellow human beings he is quite ready to take us at our own valuation. Hold the head up; look the world in the eye; and he is a churlish critic who does not at least treat you with respect.

But if the Preface is weak in tone, if it is nerveless, if it is apologetic, then the critic takes the author at his word and has a poor opinion of him, and expresses his opinion in plain language. If you throw yourself on the mercy of the court, the critic gives you at once the full penalty of the law. Confess a lamb and the critic hangs you for a sheep. Give him but five lines of Preface and he can damn any book. Acknowledge any obligation, however slight, and the critic pounces upon it; and your character for originality is lost. Every admission will be used against you. He believes that you undervalue your indebtedness to others; and if you rashly call his attention to it he tries to balance the account by overstating your debt. I know an author who had studied a subject for years, contributing from time to time to periodicals an occasional paper on certain of its sub-divisions, until at last he was ready to write his book about it; his honesty moved him to say in the Preface of the volume that he had made use of articles in certain magazines and reviews. He did not specifically declare that these articles were his own work, and so one critic called the book a compilation from recent periodical literature, leaving the reader to infer that the author had been caught decking himself out in borrowed plumes. Two friends of the same author kindly

consented to read the proof sheets of another of his books; and in the Preface thereof he thanked them by name for 'the invaluable aid they have kindly given me in the preparation of these pages for the press.' One critic took advantage of this acknowledgment to credit the two friends with a material share in the work of which they had only read the proof. The author of that remarkable book, 'The Story of a Country Town,' wrote a most pathetic Preface, a cry of doubt wrung from his heart; and there was scarcely a single favourable review of the volume, the praise of which had not been dampened by the Preface.

The only safe rule is resolutely to set forth the merits of the book in the Preface, and to be silent as to its faults. Do not apologise for anything. Confess nothing. If there are omissions, pride yourself on them. If the book has an inevitable defect, boast of it. A man has the qualities of his faults, says the French maxim; in a Preface, a man must defiantly set up his faults as qualities. Of course this needs to be done with the greatest skill; and it is seen in perfection only in the Prefaces of those who have both taste and tact, and who combine a masculine vigour of handling with a feminine delicacy of touch. Anybody can write a book—as I have said already—but only a man singularly gifted by nature and richly cultivated by art can write a Preface as it ought to be written.

If common decency requires absolutely that the author confess something, an indebtedness to a predecessor, or the like, even then this confession must not encumber and disfigure the Preface. Dismiss the thought of the confession wholly from your mind while you are composing the Preface. Then declare your indebtedness and avow any of the seven deadly sins of which you may have been guilty—in a note, in a modest and unobtrusive little note, either at the end of the book or at the bottom of the page. The critic always reads the Preface, but only a man really interested in the subject ever digs into a note. A footnote, lurking shyly in fine type, is perhaps the best place for a man to confess his sins in. And yet there is a great advantage in postponing the bad quarter-of-an-hour as long as possible—that is to say, to the very end of the book. When the aspiring dramatist brought his tragedy to Sheridan as the manager of Drury Lane, he said that he had written the prologue himself and he had ventured to hope that perhaps Mr. Sheridan would favour him with an epilogue. 'An epilogue, my dear sir,' cried Sheridan; 'it will never come to that!'

In talking over the true theory of the Preface with friends engaged in other trades than that of letters, I have found that the same principle obtains elsewhere. A learned professor told me that he never declared the limitations of his course in his first lecture; he preferred to begin by getting the attention of the students; when he had once acquired this, why, then he found occasion casually in the second or third, or even the fourth, lecture to let his hearers know, as if by accident, just what bounds he proposed to set to his discourse. The case of the dramatist is even harder, for an acknowledgment of any kind printed in the playbill, before the curtain rises on the first act for the first time, is more dangerous than the most apologetic Preface. Dramatists have always availed themselves of the royal privilege of priggish—or, if this sound unseemly, let us say, of taking their goods wherever they found them. So many playwrights have presented as new and original plays which were ‘not translated, only taken from the French,’ that critics are wary and suspicious. They are inclined to believe the worst of their fellow-man when he has written a play: after all, as M. Thiers said, it is so easy not to write a tragedy in five acts. But if a man has written a tragedy in five acts or a comedy in three, if a man is an honest man, and if he is under some trifling obligations to some forgotten predecessor, what is he to do? The critics are sure to suppose that the author has understated his indebtedness. If he say he took a hint for a scene or a character from Schiller or Sir Walter Scott or Alexandre Dumas, the critics are likely to record that the play is derived from Schiller, or Scott, or Dumas. If he say his plot was suggested by a part of an old play, they are likely to set it down as founded on the old play. If he confess that his piece is remotely founded on another in a foreign tongue, they call it an adaptation. And if he, in the excess of his honesty, presents his play humbly as an adaptation, they go a step farther and accept it as a translation, and are even capable of finding fault with it, because it does not exactly reproduce the original. If Mr. Pinero, when, in his charming comedy ‘The Squire,’ he sought to bring the scent of the hay across the footlights, had made an allusion to Mr. Hardy’s story, not a few dramatic critics would have called the play an adaptation of the story—which it was not. It is impossible for the dramatist to frame an acknowledgment which shall declare with mathematical precision his indebtedness to any given predecessor for a bit of colour, for a vague suggestion of character, for a stray hint of a situation, or

for a small but pregnant knot of man and motive. It cannot be set down in plain figures. Unfortunately for him who writes for the stage, the playbill which everybody reads is the only preface; and there are no footnotes possible. The dramatist has to confess his obligation at the very worst moment, or else for ever after hold his peace. But this is not the time for a discussion of the ethics of plagiarism, which would lead me too far afield.

‘A preface, being the entrance to a book, should invite by its beauty. An elegant porch announces the splendour of the interior,’ said the elder Disraeli, setting forth the theory of the Preface as it was in the past. But this is not the new and true theory of the Preface, which should be written in letters of gold in the study of every Maker of Books:—‘If you want to have your book criticised favourably, give yourself a good notice in the Preface!’ This is the true theory, in the very words of its discoverer. If it is not absolutely sound and water-tight, it is, at all events, an admirable working hypothesis. Although others had had faint glimmerings of the truth, it was left for a friend of mine to formulate it finally and as I have given it here. To him are due the thanks of all Makers of Books—and he is a publisher.

BRANDER MATTHEWS.

## *A Tale of a Pike.*

**A**MONG the inhabitants of our lakes and rivers I do not believe there is a greater fraud and disappointment than the pike. Other fish have a character and ideal, and live up to them; he is only reliable in so far as that he is certain to disappoint expectation—to be shy when he should be ravenous, and ravenous when he should be shy. That is not the opinion of expert anglers, or of those who write books on fishing; I only give it as the result of my own experience, the experience of an ignorant cockney.

I was introduced to the pike under peculiar circumstances. It used to be my invariable custom to spend about a month in summer in a quiet Northumbrian inn on the banks of the Till. My reasons for doing so I am not obliged to state. Perhaps it was because my friend Tom Burton's father lived in the neighbourhood; perhaps because I have a poet's love of the low blue Cheviot Hills and the silent prosperous district over which they cast their shadow; and as a third 'perhaps' I will say that it possibly may have been because Mary Burton, Tom's sister, is the sweetest and loveliest maid on the Borders. Indeed it was through thinking so much of her that ever I came to see the pike at all—I say 'the pike,' because it is to one particular jack I refer.

I will explain how it came about. As I am of a reserved disposition, and dislike being teased about my affairs, I found it necessary to blind my associates in London as to my real purposes in the North of England; so before I took my second journey I bought a beautiful trouting-rod, and spent a fabulous sum on tackle of various descriptions, and gave out that I had become an enthusiastic angler. Such nonsense as that was, to be sure! But by reading old Walton I gained enough of knowledge to serve conversational purposes, and when I came home I made no scruple to tell a number of extraordinary stories regarding the havoc I had made among the trout, and even (Heaven forgive me!) the salmon. I do not claim to possess any extraordinary inventive

powers on account of these imaginative performances; on the contrary, observation has taught me that among anglers the gift is quite common.

With me fishing was a very simple process. But before I describe it let me enter a much-needed protest against Sir Walter Scott's reference to my favourite river as 'the deep and sullen Till.' In the neighbourhood of Flodden Hill it does happen to flow languidly in the midst of great green haughs—and how beautiful they are in June, when the silvery hue of the daisies is broken only by the gold of buttercups in the centre and the blue of speedwells lining the river-brink!—and its slow pace is still further retarded by several mill-dams; but travel either up or down, you will find it streaming gaily past rock and boulder, or clasping in its great arms a buxom island clothed with long grass and fern, out of which trees of various kinds are projected. If I do not inform my readers which part I admire most, it is for good and sufficient reasons. It is enough to say that it is one of the most romantic portions of the river. On the one bank a great wood stretches away for miles, overshadowing a cool and shaded walk, and the innermost trees wave their branches over the river; on the other is a steep and broken incline, with gorse and bracken enough on it to form a tolerably good fox-cover. Past the wood and the whin the river dances in broken streams that are a joy to the heart of a trout-fisher.

I am not a real but only a make-believe angler, and therefore, when I sallied forth with rod and line, I carefully avoided the streams. On the few occasions on which I had been tempted to take any other course one of two things had invariably happened. Either my flies had caught the tree-tops and been lost there, or, if I did manage to get them on to the water, they speedily got hanked on the weeds and suffered the same fate. As a lover of the picturesque I adored the streams, and especially at even, when the rising moon happened to shine straight down the river, and the water, like Time, moved ever on with its sob or smile over and past the shadows that waved or were motionless, past them as it had rolled past their ancestors ere the trees that cast them had being, past them as it will roll past their innumerable successors; for the brief shadows endure but for an hour, while the river goes on for ever. But as an angler I hated the streams. My favourite place for fishing was in the pool above them. Close beside it was an old willow-tree, the roots of which had been laid bare by the floods. The tree itself, though green and healthy, had fallen almost prostrate in a downward direction. About seventy yards

further up was one of those great beds of weed that are so numerous in a hot summer.

My method of fishing, as I have hinted, was simplicity itself. It was merely to cast a line with a worm into this hole, sit down, light a pipe or cigar, and watch the float. In the course of half-an-hour or so a bobbing up and down of the cork would give warning that something was at the bait. My plan was to give the creature plenty of time. If it continued to tug for five minutes or so I would lug it out, generally to find that it was an abominable eel. Sometimes, however, the appearance of a perch would diversify the proceedings and afford me immense gratification. I was rendered exceedingly proud once by getting no fewer than four of these, to my mind, beautiful fish, in little more than as many minutes.

I was no angler, and I took no delight in angling, but as I sat in the shade of the willow-tree it was amusing to watch the water rats playing among the branches, or the little rabbits popping in and out of their holes on the banks, or a water-hen feeding its brood of young ones swimming after her like so many tiny balls of black wool. One day, while thus watching and musing, my eye happening to fall upon the water, what was my delight and surprise to notice a great, fine-looking fish floating close to the weeds. He might be perhaps four feet below the surface, and never moved except almost automatically to wave his fin or slightly bend his tail. It has always been a great pleasure to me to see closely for the first time any fine, healthy wild creature, and I might have watched this one long enough but that I was desirous of knowing its name. I therefore signalled to the gamekeeper, who was coming along with his gun, and asked him what it was.

‘Bless you, sir,’ he answered, ‘it’s but an ugly pike. That is his hole; you may see him any day, and if it warn’t for the tree-roots and the weeds and the bad landing-place, I would quick shift him with a net. I killed over a hundred in the early part of the summer. They had fairly destroyed the trout-fishing.’

The keeper, whose acquaintance with me was of long standing, sat down and told me a number of extraordinary stories about pike. I was interested but not moved. To hear about the pike was pleasant enough, but to fish for him would have demanded too much exertion in hot weather. So I smoked and listened in a very calm and dispassionate state of mind.

The evening after, as I was walking on the river-side with Mary Burton, I happened in an evil hour to relate to her this incident

of the pike, enlarging for dramatic effect on his ferocity and appetite.

My relations with Mary need explanation. I had been her lover for several years, but it was one of her peculiarities to believe that this was a secret. As well as being the prettiest she was the shyest girl in the district. Although there was no barrier to our union, she always put me off when I asked her to allow me to ask her father's consent to its taking place. That night, under the orchard trees, before parting with her, I was urging my suit with more than usual impetuosity, when all at once a bright look flashed upon the drooping face.

'Well, dear,' she said, 'I will when—' and at this word the soft eyes began to twinkle with mischief, and the sweet lips to assume their sauciest curl—'when—when—you catch that pike! Good night!' and before I had quite recovered from the shock her light dress had disappeared into the house, whence a moment after issued a single peal of soft, low, mocking laughter.

For a while I felt as a man feels who has been 'chaffed' and made ridiculous when he was rather inclined to show off. In the darkness my face flushed to think what a useless 'tailor'—their strongest term of contempt—I must appear to these country people. But the joke had been made in a style too pleasant for it to wound deeply, and with a little effort I soon rallied, but it was with a curious sense of pique. 'I shall take you at your word, ladybird,' I said to myself on my way back to the inn; 'they laugh best who laugh last, and it will be your turn to blush when I throw down that pike at your feet.' How thankful I felt at that moment for having brought with me some books on angling! Before going to bed I had learned what each of them had to say about the pike, and nothing could by any possibility have been more encouraging. 'A fresh-water shark,' said one; 'the most ravenous of river fishes,' said another; 'will swallow anything,' averred a third; 'might be killed with a rusty hook and a clothes-line,' contemptuously said a fourth great authority. 'Ho, ho, ladybird,' I thought to myself, 'little did you know how easy was the task you set me. Evidently you knew no more about the pike than I did.' Had there been proper tackle at hand I should have gone to the river-side before going to bed, so sure did I feel that Master Jack could be had for the asking. While I slept that night he was slain a hundred times and more, and each time I awoke and discovered the mistake I vowed afresh that he should not see to-morrow's sun go down.

To make assurance doubly sure I slipped over next morning to

the gamekeeper's cottage to get his advice on some minor points, and also to borrow a stout rod and line, my own accoutrements being meant for small trout fishing. Before starting I jotted down what the books seemed to think the favourite baits. These were, a lump of fat bacon, an eel's head, a frog, a small trout, and a minnow; others were given, but these seemed the most popular, and I made up my mind to try them in the order in which they are set down. I resolved to say nothing to the keeper about my book-knowledge, but to test the one by the other. When I entered the paddock in front of the dog-kennels, he was stripped to the shirt beside a tub of water, busily engaged washing a liver-and-white setter.

'Good morning, James,' I said affably. 'You seem busy.'

'Very, sir. Gettin' the dogs right for next month. They were dressed yesterday, and they're gettin' a wesh this morning. Come up in a week and see the difference of them.'

'I am rather sorry you are so much engaged, as I had a slight favour to ask; but take a taste of this to kill the odour of these animals,' and I handed him a flask with which I had specially armed myself, for I have not spent so much time in the country without learning the surest way to 'fetch' a gamekeeper. 'The truth is,' I continued, 'I've taken a strong notion to fish for pike, but I have no suitable rod; and besides, I don't know anything about it, and would like a hint from you.'

This was enough. A strong rod and line could easily be procured, and for the rest I learned that my baits were as likely as not to meet with success; 'only,' said my Mentor honestly, 'I never try pike myself except with the net.' His information was all second-hand. As I went away—to meet him in a couple of hours, when, as he thought, the dogs would be washed, the ferrets fed, and other pressing duties done—I carelessly remarked:

'I would stand you a bottle of the best whisky, Robson, if you could put me up to getting that pike at the willow-tree some time this week.'

'If you mean it I'll try,' answered the gamekeeper.

That afternoon at four o'clock I might have been seen with a gigantic rod, twenty feet long and of tremendous weight, labouring at my accustomed place, heaving a huge piece of bacon over the weeds and letting it float down past the pool into the stream. It was very exciting at first, for every few minutes the pike seem to be there, until I discovered that it was the bait caught in weeds or stones. After two hours of such exercise my

arms ached fearfully, so, throwing my bait into the pool with a float, I sat down and smoked in the semi-despair of smothered expectation. Fruitlessly, however; darkness came, and I was forced to go home with an empty basket. That night I scored fat bacon out of all my books, and on the morning continued the campaign with an eel's head. With a bait like that I felt myself insulting the enemy, and was hardly disappointed when once more the sun went down without Jack as much as venturing out. Next day, however, I thought myself bound to succeed. The keeper had procured a beautiful yellow frog, and all the ancient and modern writers seemed to agree that this was the lure most tempting to a hungry jack. My piscatorial tutor put it nicely on the hooks—so nicely that it swam about with evident enjoyment and agility. He had a big float to keep it from sinking too far down, and sinkers to hinder it from rising too far up; it was gently and firmly coerced into pursuing a strict *via media*. Still Jack was not tempted. He made no effort to contest the ownership of the frog; and that unhappy animal, after struggling until I was sorry for it, finally managed to escape by swimming into the weeds. When I drew out the line he was off and away. I felt too dispirited to try another, and my belief in the voracity of the pike was greatly shaken. I grew desperate, and seriously meditated asking the keeper to kill a pike for me with the net, which I was prepared to affirm was my friend at the willow-tree. I reserved that, however, as the last resource of a baffled and beaten lover.

My next effort was with a minnow. At first I tried to follow the keeper's directions and work it about in the neighbourhood of the weeds, but as the only result of this was that my line caught on the bottom, I flung it in with a cork-float. This time I imagined that I was really to be successful, for as I lay and watched, down with a strong, long pull went the cork. My hands shook with excitement as I seized the rod and felt a weight at it such as I had never felt before. With a strong effort I struggled to remember all I had read and heard about running a great fish, and most warily and cautiously set about landing the monster. But he wouldn't run. When I pulled he put a great stress on the line; when I gave him his way he did not move more than a few feet. This did not last long, for if he would not 'play' I thought the sooner I got him out the better; so, man against fish, we both pulled, with the consequence that I proved the stronger, and to my infinite disgust succeeded in placing upon the green-sward a monstrous eel! I felt hurt. The denizens of the deep

seemed to be having a small joke at me. Nevertheless, I tried again with minnow, and got another great eel but no pike.

Next day, when trying with trout, I nerved myself with the thought that this was my last but best chance. The day was approaching on which it would be necessary for me to return to London, and even had that not been the case I wanted the courage requisite to try any more devices. I prayed the gods to be propitious to one struggling so hard to achieve a great object by honourable means, and in my inmost heart I threatened them that I would say farewell to honesty if they failed me. All was of no use. As I was exerting all my muscle to make a big cast with my gigantic rod the hook caught in a whin bush behind me, and, crack! the top was broken. Sorrowfully and despairingly I took up the fragments, and with a long and dismal face carried them back to the keeper. I had reached the end of my patience. My gloom was momentarily dispersed, however, when I entered the paddock. The man of traps and guns, crimson with rage, and with a great board in his hand, was careering in full chase after a fine game bantam I had often admired on previous occasions. 'It has nearly killed his best carrier pigeon,' said his comely wife, in explanation of an outburst which was not nearly so surprising to her as to me. In a few minutes her husband came up carrying the dead bird by the heels. As soon as he saw me his countenance cleared, and his first question was, had I killed the pike? At my mishap he only laughed. Give it up? Oh, no, he would not let me give it up; he was not in the habit of slipping his chances of a bottle of whisky so easily as that.

'Look here, sir,' he said, producing a great bottle in which three nice trout were swimming, 'I kept these as a last chance. We'll try a night-line,' and he looked quite happy and certain. 'You be fishing at about eight to-night as usual with your little rod, and I'll step round that way. I want a rabbit, at any rate.'

As I had been previously struck with the great determination and resourcefulness of this man, I implicitly obeyed his directions. Before the appointed time I was at my station. Putting a nice red worm on my hook I flung it in and sat down on the stump of a tree to have a smoke until my friend appeared. While in this posture I was so completely shrouded from view by the willows that a great heron, without seeing me, came up the river flapping its heavy wings, and alit to fish in one of the shallow streams. I was watching it so intently that I never saw the keeper until his hand was on my shoulder, and he said:

'There's something at your line, sir.'

'Oh, never mind the line—it's only an eel. But look at that bird! Can't you shoot him?'

The gun was cocked in a moment, but the heron was out of gunshot, and, as if it had heard what we were saying, rose up and departed across the wood to another bend in the river.

Then I turned to my line, little dreaming what a curious lesson in angling I was about to receive. Dip, dip, dip went the cork below the water, but never stopped long. The jerks were just like those of a small eel. Very carelessly did I commence to draw it in. As I was doing so, however, the fish suddenly seemed to become endowed with the strength of a demon. The reel creaked as the line flew out like lightning.

'Let him go!' yelled the keeper. 'By the Lord Harry, if it's not the pike!'

I did let him go. And now the fish, getting into mid-stream, and not being hooked, went slowly; yet, as if he knew there was something wrong, he rose to the surface. I noticed my line getting higher and higher, until at last it seemed to lie on the top of the water. Then there was a swish and a plunge, the report of a gun, a cloud of smoke, and my line dangled loose.

'Pull him out,' said the keeper.

'He's off,' said I.

'He's not, for I shot him,' said the keeper.

Thereupon I drew the line in, and, joy! I felt after all something at the end of it.

'It's the dead pike,' said the keeper.

'We'll soon see,' I answered, and pulled it ashore. I lifted it easily enough, for to my chagrin what I had hooked was the smallest, most insignificant-looking mite of a red-finned perch it has ever been my lot to see. I stared at it in blank amazement. Imagination failed to conceive how that trembling creature could have put such stress on my line. I was roused from my unpleasant reverie by the voice of the keeper, who was saying, as much to himself as to me:

'I saw the shot strike him. If that fish isn't killed I've made it no weel'—a favourite saying of his when he had wounded anything badly without bringing it immediately down.

'What fish?' I asked bitterly; 'do you call that thing a fish?' touching the poor perch with my toe.

'That! No, I mean the pike. Didn't you see him take your perch as you were drawing it in? I shot it when it came to the surface, and I'll bet a sovereign it drifts into that stream.'

We both strained our eyes to catch a glimpse of him in the clear shallow water where the pool merges into the stream.

'Look yonder!' cried the keeper; and sure enough there was the gleaming white belly of a dying fish, powerless to keep itself from being floated into the head of the stream. Not one word did I say, but, springing up to the waist in the water, I dashed into the river, and, too eager to wait quietly until the pike drifted to a shallow in which I could pick it up, down I dived for it at once, and, though nearly carried away by the current, emerged in triumph with it in my arms.

'Hoorah!' shouted the keeper, 'but he is a slapper!' and when weighed it turned the scale at twenty-seven pounds. After getting it I felt a new man.

'You take that fish straight up to Miss Burton,' I said to the keeper, 'and when you return to your house you'll find your bottle all right. In the meantime I need a change of dress.'

Shortly after, feeling very fresh and invigorated after my bath, dressed according to my best taste, and with a choice flower in my buttonhole, I stepped up to see Mr. Burton, greatly to the confusion and dismay of his daughter, who tried hard to make us believe that she had never meant what she said. Before leaving the farmhouse that night there was a consultation over the fate of the pike. Mary timidly proposed to stuff him.

'Stoof him! Thou'lt stoof none o' him,' said her Yorkshire parent. 'Woife, thou'lt have him done for breakfast to-morrow mornin' wi' a bit o' fat bacon, an' thou'lt come, lad, and help us eat un.'

Need I say how gladly I promised?

I looked in at the keeper's as I went home that night, and I am sorry to confess that I found him and a crony just finishing the bottle of whisky, while Jem was incoherently trying for the hundredth time to relate the adventure.

The wild winds of autumn had stripped the trees of their many-coloured leaves, and the frosts and floods had swept the weed-beds from the river, when I returned to Till-side to carry thence a bride pure as the snow that now mantled the Cheviots, and as shy as the wild things that live there. We kept no memento of the pike, but we called our firstborn Jack, and there he lies in the cradle at this moment, a sleeping monument of my first and last victory over his namesake.

P. ANDERSON GRAHAM.

## *The Song of the Poplars.*

MOVING, moving, never still,  
 Surely possessed by a living will,  
 Defiantly tossing their crowns on high,  
 As if angry they could not reach the sky ;  
 Never silent through the night,  
 Silvered and shaded by changing light,  
 Quickened and thrilled by the summer breeze,  
 Unresting, unwearied, those poplar trees ;  
 Till quivering, crashing with magic might,  
 They seem to shriek with a mad delight,  
 And stretch their hands to welcome the rain,  
 And raise their heads with a proud disdain  
 When the tempest howls across the plain.  
 Through the sweet still nights of the month of June  
 In the voiceful silence they murmur their tune  
 Of gladness and love to the listening moon,  
 Or, perchance, are rehearsing some quaint old lay  
 Of one who for the joys of a mortal day  
 Frittered his godlike life away.  
 Of earnest longing, and strong desire,  
 Of prayer unuttered, the spirit's fire,  
 Of sad delight, and rejoicing pain,  
 Of all the things that never again  
 Shall charm us or wound us—a sweet refrain  
 From the Past now loved with sad regret,  
 Bringing hope for the life that is ours yet  
 With its maddening dance in the hall of death,  
 And grim grief of all drawing human breath.  
 Sometimes it murmurs of youth's young dream,  
 Clothing the Future in golden gleam,  
 Of the things that are not, but only seem.

But always, always, whatever the song,  
As the leaves twist and turn in a dancing throng,  
Whispers there are of the great Unseen  
Close wrapped in its garment of living green,  
Of eternal will, invisible power,  
Breathing in every tree and flower,  
Of law which begins in infinite love,  
Of an earth which is bound to the heaven above,  
Of changeless purpose and healing grace,  
And a growing, a godlike human race.  
Such, such is the song of the wayward breeze  
As it plays in and out of the poplar trees.

RUTH BRINDLEY.

## *An Early Essayist.*

THE forgotten books of the world are many, and no doubt in most cases the fate which has overtaken them is just enough; but it is none the less strange that a book, which has been the delight of thousands for a century or more, should be so lost to the world at large as hardly to be known to any but the curious bibliophile or the more pronounced bibliomaniac.

Such a book is the '*Silva de varia Leccion*' of Pedro Mexia, or Messia, the first edition of which was published at Seville in the year 1542. From that time until the middle of the seventeenth century it was in great demand, and translations were published in French, Italian, German, Flemish, and English, and of the Spanish and French versions there were many editions.

In France the example of Mexia led other writers at once into a similar style of composition, and numerous editions of Mexia's work appeared bound up with the similar and imitative work of Antoine du Verdier.

The first English translation was by Thomas Fortescue, and printed in London by John Day in 1576 under the title of '*The Forest, or Collection of Historyes, no less profitable than pleasant and necessary.*' An English edition of 1613 appeared, with essays of other authors, under the title of '*The Treasurie of Ancient and Modern Times.*'

Although this work was held in such esteem for so long a period, and in so many countries, its author is not mentioned by Hallam in his '*History of the Literature of Europe.*' The names of many men find places in that great work which have less claim upon the historian, if measured by the extent of their renown in the times in which they lived. He obtains some share of attention in Ticknor's '*History of Spanish Literature,*' but the notices are short and much scattered.

A French copy of the '*Varia Leccion*' with the following title-page—

LES  
DIVERSES  
LEÇONS DE  
PIERRE MESSIE

GENTILHOMME

DE SEVILLE,

*Avec trois dialogues dudit Auteur, contenant  
variables et memorables histoires,  
mises en François par Claude  
Gruget Parisien,*

Augmentees outre les precedentes impres-  
sions de la suite d'icelles, faite par

ANTOINE DU VERDIER

Sieur de Vauprivaz, &amp;c.



A LYON

PAR BARTHELEMY HONORAT.

1577.

*Avec Privilege du Roy.*

was a year or two ago sold amongst the surplus books from a noble house in that county, which has been called 'the seed-plot of knightly families,' and has suggested these remarks.

Mexia was of a noble family, and was born about the end of the fifteenth century at Seville, then the capital of the Spanish

kingdom. From his earliest youth he manifested a great liking for study, and by his talents he won the esteem of the Emperor Charles V., who conferred upon him the title of his Historiographer. Mexia was engaged upon a life of Charles V. at the time of his death, which happened about the year 1552. This biography remains unfinished, and in manuscript, though the second book has been published in the '*Bib. de Autores Españoles.*' The whole is much praised by Ferrer del Rio for its skilful arrangement and pure and dignified style, and, as Mr. Ticknor says, ought to be published. Robertson does not allude to the work of Mexia, and perhaps was not aware of it. Ghilini has made Mexia the subject of a very flattering article in his '*Teatro d' Uomini Letterati.*'

Mexia, in addition to the '*Varia Leccion*' and the '*Charles V.*,' wrote a history of the Cæsars from Julius Cæsar to Maximilian (which was translated at once into Italian); also seven dialogues on the subject of medicine and physicians, the disputes of the philosophers, the stars, and the elements; a book entitled '*Laus Asini*' (Praise of the Ass), of which no copy is known; and a genealogy of the house of Mexia.

The Dialogues were translated into several of the Continental languages, and in French were published with the various editions of Claude Gruget's version of the '*Diverses Leçons.*' Three only of these dialogues are contained in the copy above mentioned. These have for their subjects '*The Sun,*' '*The Earth,*' and '*Meteors.*' The dialogues are, however, not entirely restrained by their titles. To quote the '*argument*' of the dialogue on the sun:—'*In this dialogue it is proved that the sun is larger than the earth, and the earth larger than the moon; and that the earth is round, that men support themselves upon every part of its surface; and as to the authority of certain ancient disputants whether there be any antipodes or not.*'

The third only of the dialogues included in this book appears to correspond with any of those in Mr. Ticknor's copy. He says of them—'*In the first the advantages and disadvantages of having regular physicians are agreeably set forth, with a lightness and exactness of style hardly to be expected.*' '*The second dialogue, which is on inviting to feasts, is amusing; but the last, which is on subjects of physical science, such as the causes of thunder, earthquakes, and comets, is nowadays only curious or ridiculous.*' This would hardly seem to be the standpoint from which to judge of the merit of sixteenth-century dialogues; and although,

no doubt, most of the explanations are more 'curious' than true, yet even in the present day it is not quite settled what comets really are, nor how earthquakes are produced; and Mexia's view that this 'quaking is caused by certain exhalations and heavy gases, which, by the power and force of the sun, are engendered within the caverns and concavities of the earth,' finds its advocates still. A short extract from the dialogue in which he explains how it is that men and heavy bodies are retained on the surface of the earth at the antipodes will suffice to show that though fifty or sixty years had yet to elapse before any real light was thrown upon the nature of gravitation, Mexia had a clear and correct idea of its action—'The sky is above in all parts of the earth, and the centre of the earth is below, towards which all heavy things naturally tend from whatever side of the earth; so that if God had made a hole, which by a true diameter passing through the whole earth, from the point where we are, as far as the other opposite and contrary to this, on the other side of the earth, passed through the centre of it: then if one dropped a plummet, as masons do, know that it would not pass to the other side of the earth, but would stop and place itself in the centre of it; and if from the other side one let fall another, they would meet together in the very centre, and there they would stop. It is quite true that the force might well cause the plummet to pass somewhat beyond, because its movement, as long as it was going towards the centre, would naturally be accelerated, passing somewhat beyond, but in the end it would return to its place.'

There is a singular resemblance between the collection of short essays which compose the '*Silva*' or '*Forest*' and those of Montaigne, not only in the miscellaneous character of their subjects, and the quaint mixture of superstition and puerile arguments with strong common sense and an attempt to grapple with social and other questions which have hardly yet become obsolete, but also, to some extent, in style, and in the conception which each author had formed of the rules, or rather want of rule, which was to guide his composition. Mexia says in opening one of his essays, 'I do not bind myself to regard the order and sequence of my subject-matter in this work, but to write of things as they present themselves, or rather as it pleases me;' and readers of Montaigne know that he makes this temper of his mind very prominent. Montaigne, too (it is worthy of note), mentions in his preface the existence of other '*Miscellanies*' prior to his own. There appears to be no mention by

name of the 'Silva' of Mexia in any of Montaigne's essays, but there was no other 'Miscellany' so popular as this; and as it preceded his own work by nearly forty years, it would be difficult to suppose that Montaigne was ignorant of it. How far it suggested and gave shape to his own compositions it would be difficult to say.

That Mexia had, like other authors of the sixteenth century, felt the influence of the 'Attic Nights' of the then favourite Aulus Gellius is most probable (though Mr. Ticknor regards his 'Silva' as an imitation of Macrobius or Athenæus); and, indeed, one of his essays, forming Chapter XVI. (Montaigne heads his essays as chapters), and having for title, 'Of a dispute which existed between a master and his disciple, so subtle that the judges could not decide it,' is simply and avowedly an extract from Aulus Gellius, and Mexia mentions this author many times. Does Europe owe to Aulus Gellius indirectly and to Mexia directly the Essays of Montaigne?

But to return to Mexia. His subjects range 'from grave to gay, from lively to severe,' from those of which the interest has quite evaporated in the course of time, and those whose accurate presentment of some of the strange modes of thought of our ancestors of three centuries ago gives a piquancy which we cannot resist, to others which almost startle us by recalling the fact that questions which we had regarded as peculiarly characteristic of our own times and nation, and almost 'born of the hour,' were troubling the minds of thinking men three hundred years ago.

Of the first-named class of subjects are, 'That the opinion of those who think that the years of old time were shorter than those of the present is false: which was the first town of the world, and that the patriarchs had more children than those who are named in the Holy Scriptures.'

Of the second class of essays some resemble Montaigne's argument that 'Turtles and ostriches hatch their eggs with only looking at them, which shows that their eyes have a certain power to dart' (Chapter XX.), and remind one of the famous problem propounded to the Royal Society of England, as to how it happened that a fish might be introduced into a vessel already full of water without causing the water to overflow. Natural science was not yet the science of experiment. One of Mexia's essays has for its subject, 'Why man walks erect; why he weighs more fasting than after having taken a repast; and the reason why he weighs more dead than alive, with other fine questions;'

and in this essay Mexia tells us that Erasmus also had discussed the second question, and had given much the same reasons for it as Pliny, from whom probably they both derived the question itself.

To do Mexia justice, however, it should be noticed that he does not always accept statements as to natural phenomena without question, even where they are less improbable than some of those which we have just noticed. In an essay having for its title, 'By what means one may draw a quantity of fresh water from the sea; and why cold water makes more noise in falling than warm; and whether a ship carries more weight upon salt water than upon fresh,' Mexia relates the statements of Aristotle and Pliny to the effect that, if hermetically-sealed vessels of wax be plunged into the sea for a whole day, they will be found to contain a quantity of fresh water; and he adds, 'Indeed, if this thing is true (I say if it is true, because I have not made proof of it), it might be of great service in many necessities which ordinarily occur. At the same time it seems to me that if salt water becomes fresh by entering into vessels of wax, it ought also to become fresh by being filtered through wax, of which one might make vessels like those which are now made of certain stones, to filter and freshen the water; for by the same reason these things will tend to the same effect, yet it seems to me that there is some difference between entering into empty vessels, and issuing out of full ones, inasmuch as there is an appearance of greater force and violence in issuing out of the full vessel; nevertheless the curious can try both.' In writing of a theory attributed to the ancient Egyptians, that the human heart, from being originally very small, grows with increasing age to a maximum, and then decreases in size until death, he quotes a number of authorities, and then observes, 'I have been wishful to bring forward all these testimonies, because this thing is hard to believe, that each may then give such credence to it as shall seem good to him;' and, again, referring to a popular belief, he says, 'Nevertheless there are many who contradict this, and deny that the viper dies in its parturition; to which opinion I adhere, because the other does not seem to me natural, and because I have not seen the occurrence, nor is there any one who says that he has seen it.'

An essay 'On the invention and use of bells, what profit comes of them: and who was the first who conjured devils,' recalls to us the belief which led to the belfries of so many of our old churches being decorated with those grotesque stone figures apparently

leaping or flying out from the walls. Some of them are used as gargoyles, but others have no meaning beyond that which they derive from this old superstition of the bells. Mexia perceives that objections may be raised to this belief, and gravely and ingeniously argues against such difficulties as occur to him. He says, 'Because some may find strange that which I have said, that the devils flee the sound of bells, inasmuch as they have neither body nor sense to hear, and to be made to tremble or to be touched, and they have simply an incorporeal intelligence: to that I answer, that the things which they cannot comprehend with a bodily sense, which is wanting to them, they comprehend by an intellectual cognisance: and look how evil spirits are tormented by fire.'

Essays upon 'Several marvellous properties of certain things, and to what stars and planets they are subject; 'Of the wonderful property of a little animal, the bite of which is healed by the sound of music: and also of some other infirmities which are healed by that same medicine; 'Of the virtues and properties of precious stones, and whence proceeds the virtue which is in magic rings,' with others of a similar character, show the strong hold which the belief in astrology, and in the practice of a medical art nearly related to astrology, yet had over the minds even of learned men.

Amongst the still unsolved and perhaps insoluble problems of the world, we find Mexia writing of that which some of the foremost men of all ages have attempted, 'In what language people spoke at the commencement of the world; ' but he wisely closes his essay with the remark, 'Nevertheless, every one may remain of the opinion which seems to him the best, since it does not matter.'

Many very excellent essays there are on historical, literary, moral, and social topics, such as 'The greatness of the Roman Empire,' 'The order and chivalry of the Templars,' 'The commencement and the cause of the faction of the Guelphs and Ghibellines,' 'The excellence and praises of labour and the injury which idleness produces,' 'How detestable is the vice of cruelty, with several examples on that subject,' 'Of the seventy who translated the Old Testament,' and others.

An essay headed 'How great is the error of Christian princes in permitting the duel,' strikes us as being much before its time, and the close reasoning and strong common sense of the essay make it, though short, one of the best in the book. 'The duel and combat,' says Mexia, 'are prohibited to the Christian who

engages in it, to him who permits it, and to him who sees it, by divine and human law, as well canonical as civil.' 'To make trial of things which cannot come to pass by any natural means, but only by the act of God, risking the result, is to tempt God: as happens in matters of purgation, in which it is notorious that in the natural way the more dexterous and powerful will vanquish the feeble and less dexterous, and the contrary (which is, that the stronger should be vanquished by the more feeble) can only happen miraculously: putting then these persons so unequal into a field, one looks for victory in him who is right, in order that the truth may be manifested; thus then one tempts God by wishing that he shall work a miracle, which will happen if the feeble be victorious over the strong, which would be contrary to nature. . . . The equity of human law wills that he who commits crime should be punished, and that the innocent should be absolved: but by the duel very often the contrary occurs.'

Two of the essays show that more than three hundred years ago men had begun to think and write of the evils of intemperance. One is headed, 'Of some evils which the intemperate use of wine produces, and what physicians have said that it is a healthy thing to become intoxicated sometimes;' and the second, 'Some instructions to cause one to hate wine: and why two things seem three to the intoxicated.' The last clause, by-the-bye, would seem to suggest that the effects of intoxication have increased since the sixteenth century, for it is generally said nowadays that drunken men see double, but then they would appear to have seen only one and a half times. Mexia is very strong in his opinions on the subject of intemperance. 'Although the liquor of wine,' he says, 'may be proper for some diseases, yet it produces so many evils and injuries, when it is not temperately taken, that the evils so far exceed the benefits that it seems as if it would have been better not to be acquainted with it, but to content ourselves with that water which God had given us to drink: seeing that one cannot imagine anything better: and also that all the other animals content themselves with it: considering even that wine has been the cause that many have lost their senses, others their lives, and others even their souls and their own salvation. And, although the injury which wine does to men is plainly recognised, yet so far are men from avoiding it that they even seek occasions and incentives to drink, and in good French some call such incentives *esquillon de vin*, others *le compulsoire à vin*, and some are to be found who of a little ham bone will make a true relic: so that

they will pass few hours in the day without kissing it with great devotion in order to drink five or six good cups the more.' Although Mexia refers to the physicians who think that it is a good thing sometimes to get drunk, he very naïvely says, 'but the reasons which they give do not at all satisfy me.' The second of his essays on this subject consists entirely of the statements and opinions of the writers of antiquity, and has therefore much less interest for us.

Of course it is impossible in a short article like this to give even an idea of the very numerous subjects over which Mexia roams, but enough has been said to show that his work is not devoid of interest. There are one hundred and seventy-six essays besides the dialogues, and hardly any of them too long to pick up and read during casual intervals of leisure in the midst of other occupations. They abound, of course, according to the custom of the age, in classical allusions, extracts, and references; and many arguments and ideas are drawn from the great writers of antiquity, but still there is evidence of much original thought, and nowhere is one oppressed by mere pedantry. Mexia is a good Catholic, and rests many of his conclusions on the Bible, even in matters not relating to religion, in a simple way which no writer for the public press would now think of doing. But notwithstanding his adherence to his Church, his mind was not to be quieted merely by the dicta of those who held the reins of power in matters which he could investigate for himself. In discussing the fate of the Templars in one of his longest essays he seems unable to make up his mind, because the evidence in their favour and the vile means used to convict them evidently affect him strongly; but on the other hand he says, 'It seems hard to believe that the Pope was mistaken in a matter of so much importance.' It may be that he had a wholesome fear of the Inquisition, and dare not state his conclusions. Prohibited books were burned by the hangman. It was not uncommon for the author to share their fate.

W. H. S. WATTS.

## *Poor Dick Warrington.*

HE had been a gentleman once, and a scholar, who had won honours at Cambridge, and was regarded as one of the best men in a college at that time unusually rich in promise. He had just seen one familiar companion of his in the old days pass into the New Law Cathedral, outside whose gates he was lounging. The famous judge gave a glance at the disreputable loafer as he went by, but never recognised him; if he had done so, he would probably have spoken, for he was a kindly-hearted man. But this very fact made the reprobate more bitter. If his old friend had cut him, there would have been some ground for declaiming against the hollowness of mankind; but Dick Warrington knew well enough that he himself had sunk out of recognition, and one's own worthlessness is not so cheering a subject of meditation as the worthlessness of other people.

He pondered over neither, but only gazed moodily after the retreating figure of his old comrade, and then turned and sauntered into Long Acre. He was nearing his lodgings; they lay in a dingy court half a mile away, when it occurred to him that he had forgotten his mission. He had come out, with the idle good-nature that seldom deserted him, to buy wine for his landlady's husband—dying, the doctor said, of consumption. Dick's quarterly pay had just arrived from the *Social Hearth*, for he contributed to that shady serial, which is a base imitation of the *Family Herald*, with none of its virtues and with all its vices. The *Family Herald*, indeed, has few vices; for it is an excellent periodical, and you may obtain from the editor, for nothing, advice on any earthly subject you choose to consult him upon, which advice will always be terse and definite, and improving. Also you may find essays on politics and social science therein, if you are intellectual—essays that inspire one with a wish that the editor of the *Family Herald* were happily controlling the destinies of our Empire instead of the too patriotic cliques which control it at present. While, as for the tales—but this is no place to rhapsodise, even over the *Family Herald*.

Warrington was on the staff of the *Social Hearth*, which is, as everybody knows, a foolish and vulgar periodical, whose 'criticism of life' is not worth twopence. It paid very badly; but he contributed more or less to several other journals, of which *Bow Bells* was the most respectable. It was a marvel how he, with his talent, could write badly enough to suit some of these editors. He said it took practice; but on the whole he succeeded admirably, and the stories and articles he furnished to the public showed, better than anything else, how far he had fallen. And yet there was a battered remnant of nobility in him, hardly conscious of its own existence. As some old picture may lie long in a dark lumber room hidden behind great masses of rubbish, till a kindly hand opens the shutter, lets in the fresh air and the sunshine, and disperses the piled-up lumber, a chance touch shakes away the covering from the forgotten picture, scatters its dusty veil, and, hardly dimmed by years, its beauty gleams into the light again—a Turner, a Velasquez. So the spiritual virtuoso may come across strange treasure-trove, acts of chivalry, of self-forgetfulness in the most unexpected quarter, dear to his heart as the Elzevir to the bibliomaniac. We were human Elzevirs once, may be; but, like the shabby volumes the book-hunter flings aside with disdain, we have been very much cut down.

Dick bought the wine, and returned leisurely to his lodgings. He stole cautiously up the dark, crooked stairs into the narrow passage, and as he traversed it a strange thing happened. Through the venerable, ancient air of a London lodging-house, that landladies always seem to fancy improves with keeping—and, indeed, it does acquire a certain fine mellowness wherein are combined the essences of many different odours—there came to him the scent of heliotrope. With it returned the memory of a day when his sister had been to visit him at college, and with her one of her friends, a beautiful, light-hearted girl, whom Dick had cared for with a transient, boyish passion. He had bought bouquets for them, and among the flowers he gave to his sister's friend was a sprig of the dim, grey-purple blossom.

He did not pause to wonder why the old scent came back to him in this widely-different atmosphere, but, passing on, entered the invalid's room. Mrs. Hartley was not there, but he saw, standing at the bedside, a girl dressed in the garb of a private sisterhood, with a cluster of flowers at her brooch. Her figure was slender and graceful, and he could see readily enough that she was a lady. His acquaintance included several women who

had taken the 'craze for humanity and typhus fever,' as he irreverently expressed it, and Iris Enderby's presence did not astonish him, though he noted her beauty with pleasure. The hair was the deep brown that has gleams of ruddier colour, and her eyes were clear and honest, and regarded one with a very steady and fearless glance. She turned her head as Dick entered, and took him in completely, so he fancied, in about a second. There was nothing impertinent in her scrutiny, but much that was painful to a man whose inner life had never been intended to bear investigation. Insight into character is all very well for the people who have the insight, but it is sometimes trying to the unlucky character; and so Dick felt as, rather defiantly, he met Iris Enderby's glance.

'She thinks,' he said inwardly, 'that I am one of the people it will not do to encourage.' The girl had formulated no opinion so distinctly; but yet his guess was not far from the truth. For there was no denying that Dick, with his battered costume, his rather dingy hands, and the reckless, devil-may-care expression on a face, grown coarse, that had once been handsome, looked a disreputable character, with whom a refined girl could have nothing in common. Therefore Iris withdrew her eyes with calm indifference, and went on measuring some medicinal compound.

Her face, with the indescribable air of fearless innocence about it that some faces will wear to the end, awoke in Dick a novel sense of embarrassment. He hesitated, but the desire to speak to her was too strong, and he crossed over to the invalid's side.

'Can I be of any use?' he asked politely.

'No, thank you,' said the girl, a trifle coldly; but her voice was very pleasant and musical. 'Mrs. Hartley will be here presently.' She turned a passing glance on him as she spoke, distrustful and yet indifferent. Evidently not the kind of girl to whom anyone would offer impertinence in cold blood. But Dick paid no heed to the restraint; he spoke again, warming to the old manner.

'I have brought him some wine,' he said, in a careless undertone, disburthening his hands as he spoke. 'I thought it would be needed, and they have very little money. You see I have lodged here now for two years, and I am sorry he has broken down. There is no hope, I suppose?' he added, in a yet more guarded voice, though the patient was sleeping heavily.

The girl turned again, and looked him full in the face. He

fancied he could trace in her eyes some regret for having judged him too harshly, and her voice was more cordial, though in all her intonations when she spoke to him, then and afterwards, he thought there was a suspicion of disdain. He never blamed her, and he knew instinctively that if his old social standing had still been his, that element in her voice would have been rather more pronounced.

'There is very little hope, I am afraid,' she said gravely. 'Has Mrs. Hartley any friends who can help her? The doctor said he would require constant care.'

'She has been earning for them both for some time,' said Dick, 'and her hands are full already. I do not think she has any friends who are likely to be of any use. If ever you are in need of a helping hand I hope you will rely upon me. I can easily sit up with him at nights and never feel it.' And, indeed, he looked as if he were so used to sitting up all night that a few additional times would make no difference to him.

'Thank you,' said Iris, and was silent again. The real or imagined hauteur in her voice annoyed Dick unaccountably.

'Unless you are too fastidious,' he said, in a sudden tone of bitterness that astounded himself, 'to take help at the hands of a poor blackguard like me.'

The girl looked at him with a strange blending of compassion and repugnance in her eyes.

'You could have been a gentleman if you had wished,' she said calmly. 'If you are what you choose to be, why blame me for taking you at your own valuation?'

There was something terribly true and relentless about her words, and Dick winced under them as the most violent reproaches had ceased to make him wince.

'Thank you,' he said. 'You show me what I have to expect from people of a higher moral standard. And yet what right have you to assume that I am worthless?'

'It is your own epithet,' she returned tranquilly. 'But—forgive me—to a certain extent men write their characters in their faces.'

Dick nearly swore a heavy oath, but he checked himself just in time, and spoke in tones of exceeding suavity.

'What excellent discrimination you have! Then you have ascertained that my character is too far gone to allow of my associating with you, to however small an extent, in a work of mercy.'

A half smile broke over the girl's face, faint and transient,

and yet it lit up the whole countenance, and softened its youthful austerity.

'I did not say that,' she returned, reluctantly. 'Who am I that I should look with scorn on any human being?' (This, by the way, she should have thought of before.) 'Indeed, if you care to give it, I believe that we shall be grateful for your help.'

'Thank you,' said Dick, his anger melting as incomprehensibly as it had arisen. 'I am at your service.'

He sat up that night with Hartley, fulfilling mechanically whatever offices were required of him, but thinking very little of the invalid, and a good deal about Iris Enderby and his own social status. He fell to drawing the most invidious comparisons—'trenchant parallels,' as Henry Kingsley calls them—between himself and his old companions, who had walked in the light as persistently as he had walked in the darkness; between himself and his own relatives, leading unimpeachable, if prosaic, lives in the West End. When he gave place to Mrs. Hartley, and slept at last, it was to dream of bishops, prayer-books, and church institutes, everything calculated to awaken a sense of sneaking deficiency, and he woke still drawing invidious comparisons between himself and all of them. If Iris Enderby was to have this startling effect on his moral nature, he thought the less he saw of her the better; accordingly, he fell into a long and interesting speculation as to whether she could ever be persuaded to tolerate him. He would find out.

There passed five strange, wild weeks, the most miserable, the most rapturous in Dick's life. It is not pleasant for a man to be scorned, knowing that he deserves scorn; but before a week was over Warrington was so madly in love with Iris Enderby that he thought he would rather be scorned by her than worshipped by any other woman. He did his utmost, humbly and persistently, to win her toleration. To do him justice, it was always her toleration, never her love. Dick had most of the vices in the calendar; but there was no cold-blooded calculation about him, and but little self-conceit. He knew that he had nothing to do with Iris Enderby, yet he was fain to conciliate her by word or action, by the delicate courtesies that please women. He had been a gentleman once, he said bitterly to himself; he would try to fall into the old ways again for the last time. It was easier than he had thought.

But Iris never changed. She was always courteous, sometimes kindly; but the look of scorn in her eyes seemed to Warrington's embittered vision never to pass away.

For five weeks he saw her daily—deft, tranquil, gentle, the light of that dark time ; at the end of those weeks Hartley died. His death was sudden at the last, and only Warrington and his wife were with him. Iris, who was to have watched that night, came an hour later. When she entered with flowers in her hands, for she had brought fresh ones every day to please the invalid, Warrington was alone in the room. A dull pain was upon him, heavier than his grief for the dead man, the hard, bitter consciousness that he should see Iris no more. He rose as she entered, and though he did not speak, his look warned her of the truth ; and she glanced hastily at the quiet face on the pillow. Her lips quivered, and the roses dropped from her hands and were scattered, spots of glowing colour on the dingy floor. Warrington, hardly knowing what he did, fell on his knees, and began to gather them up, with a wild longing to speak at all hazards, to call her his saint, his divinity.

‘Give me a rose,’ he said huskily.

The girl’s voice faltered as she answered him ; but it had a ring of indignation in it that touched him to the quick.

‘This is no time to talk of roses,’ she said passionately.

‘Oh, you do not understand,’ he exclaimed hotly. ‘You have no pity for the living.’

He did not glance up as he spoke, or he would have seen a strange look pass over her face. It passed like a shadow—was gone ; she turned away, and the next moment he heard her voice, all sympathy, speaking to Mrs. Hartley. Then, feeling like an arrant coward, he slunk back to his own room.

Iris left an hour later. Some relatives of Mrs. Hartley’s had come, and she could do little more. Dick reappeared as she was quitting the house, to offer his services as escort.

‘Thank you,’ she said, not unkindly, but with quiet decision. ‘I would rather walk alone.’

‘It is very late,’ urged Dick.

‘I am not nervous,’ she said in a cool tone of dismissal, and he fell back. But he was not to be baffled so easily. Iris might walk solitary if she liked ; but she could not prevent his following at a suitable distance, at all events, till she reached the main street. He took no pains to keep under cover, for he was reckless ; and, indeed, had she turned, his tall figure and careless gait would infallibly have betrayed him. But whether or not some instinct warned her of the truth, I cannot tell ; but she never cast a glance behind, not even when her quick footsteps brought

her into an alley rather too riotous for her liking, and he saw her hesitate once or twice. But further on, when they entered Garrick Street, he himself hastily lessened the distance between them, for things were beginning to look ominous. Half-a-dozen sailors, British and foreign, but all drunk, and all very much excited, had just poured out of one of the worst public-houses in the quarter, and were commencing a free fight among themselves. A little throng gathered, cursing and cheering, and obstructing the pathway, and Iris stopped, a good deal frightened. Dick noted one policeman, on the extreme outskirts of the disturbance, leisurely whistling for help; and then—it all happened in an instant—a drunken Lascar broke out of the throng and caught Iris by the arm. She uttered a low cry. The next moment that Lascar was lying on the pavement, to which Dick had flung him with perhaps unnecessary force.

Not for long. He was up again, with a demoniacal look of rage on his face, and he sprang at Dick like a wild beast. Something flashed in the crimson tavern lights. Then, as in a wild dream, the throng melted away, with fierce cries and ejaculations, and Iris was kneeling at Dick Warrington's side chafing his hands. There was a surgeon standing by, and one or two constables, looking down compassionately on the prostrate figure, and someone had said, 'There is no hope.' For the Lascar's aim was not made false by passion, and he had struck at the heart. A strange and wild dream, a life that she had tried to scorn, passing away for her sake into the darkness.

Dick seemed to wake from a heavy sleep with the sound of the sea in his ears, as it thundered against far distant rocks. Stay, was it the sea or the tumult of the great city? The city was growing silent now, wrapt in an ever-deepening tranquillity. Then memory came back to him; he knew what had come to pass; knew that he was dying. With a pang of regret at first, but when he raised his eyes, and saw Iris Enderby's face bending over him, he was well content. It was as colourless as his own; but there was a new expression mingled with its intentness, a look that he had dreamed of seeing there, but had never thought to see in waking life, that touched him with a vague fear.

'This is good of you,' he said faintly. 'I think it will not be for long.'

'Can you forgive me?' said the girl, in a low voice. 'You have laid down your life for me.'

Dick looked at her with amazed eyes. The surgeon had

turned away; the two constables were speaking to each other in husky undertones.

'What have I to forgive?' he asked wonderingly. 'But I will never forget you. Ah, I wish my life had been worth your taking! A poor, poor failure! If I had known you sooner, I might have had the heart to begin again; but I lost hope early—God knows why. You will never let it trouble you, this happy fate of mine?'

'It will trouble me,' she said slowly, 'all my life.'

'Ah, no!' he said eagerly; and in that instant a strange look of nobility irradiated his face, a look it had not known for many a year.

'Forget it. I am not worthy of one regretful thought from you. Indeed, indeed, I am not worthy. And how could it end more happily? For if I had lived, I should have sunk yet lower, and now I am not wholly base.'

He paused. His words were growing incoherent.

'And you will give me the heliotrope you are wearing, to take into the darkness, and I never shall be lonely.'

'I have no heliotrope,' said the girl clearly, though she shivered in the August night; 'but I will give you a rose.'

The rose she had worn was drooping now. She laid it in his hand; then, stooping suddenly, she kissed his forehead with a long, soft kiss.

A light flashed into his face, and an expression so brief, so transient, she never knew whether it had been of joy or pain. Then all grew dim.

For years after there was one street that never echoed to Iris Enderby's footsteps; but now, of all dreary haunts in London, she loves Garrick Street the best, and the children have learned to wait for her coming there, with outstretched hands, and the scent of heliotrope, as she passes, floats on the heavy air.

MAY KENDALL.

## *Moths round a Lamp.*

THE red sun fell two sultry hours before ;  
 No dew has made the lawn's vague spaces damp ;  
 In through my open windows more and more  
 The giddy moths come reeling round the lamp.

Alert fantastic shapes of differing kind,  
 They sweep and swerve in many a fitful speck,  
 And rouse the old easy commonplace to mind  
 Of wayward mortals whelmed in piteous wreck.

From bournes of Nature's pastoral silence brought,  
 Below the night's pure orbs, the wind's faint breath,  
 What wilful spell, I question of my thought,  
 Entices them to this mad glaring death ?

By what perverse doom are they led to meet  
 This fiery ruin, when so calm and cool  
 The deep grass drowns at the elms' dim feet,  
 The moist leaves droop above the starlit pool ?

But while in dreamy watch I linger long,  
 To duskier colouring my mood recedes,  
 Till now the tranquil chamber seems to throng  
 With dark wild imageries of man's misdeeds !

And then, like some full rustle of sudden wings,  
 A long breeze floats disconsolately past,  
 And steals from unseen foliage that it swings  
 A murmur of lamentation, till at last,

While the sad pulses of each gradual tone  
 A sadder meaning from my reverie win,  
 All earth's rebellious agony seems to moan  
 The curse, the mystery of all human sin !

EDGAR FAWCETT.

## *Concerning Keepsakes.*

COUNTRY doctors will sometimes tell you in strict confidence that they are frequently obliged to take vaccine from the swollen arms of healthy rural babies by sheer stealth, and to hide the fact of their guilt in this matter from the knowledge of the babies' watchful mothers with the utmost secrecy. Not that the rural intelligence, as a rule, goes in hotly for the anti-vaccination movement: the mothers object, not to their own babies being vaccinated from other people's, but to other people's children being vaccinated from theirs. And the reason is that if anything were afterwards to happen to the alien baby, their own baby would suffer accordingly. Whatever illness, trouble, or misfortune fell upon the recipient of the mystic virus would fall also by some magical bond upon the child from whom the vaccine was originally taken. A strange sympathy is supposed to establish itself between the two by the act of vaccination, just as when Zulus or Red Indians transfuse the contents of one another's veins, and become thenceforth brothers by blood for the whole remainder of their joint existence.

The common and familiar mad-dog superstition of civilised England exhibits the same primitive idea in its simplest, earliest, and most naked form. According to this crude and curious belief, if a sane dog happens any day to take a stray bite at you, and afterwards goes mad, you will get hydrophobia at the same time that he does, out of pure sympathy. Years may elapse between bite and disease, but the hidden bond of union between you two persists for all that: the dog has drunk the blood of your body, your veins have sucked in the poison of his fangs; and you are one accordingly thenceforth and forever in spirit and essence. I have known of a case where a farmer, being bitten by a dog, shot the animal at once, to prevent his going mad and communicating the disease to himself by sympathy. Somebody jocosely suggested to the man, by way of laughing him down, that to kill the dog was far worse than to run the risk of hydrophobia: for surely it must affect him more seriously for the

animal to moulder into dust in its grave than to run about and take its fair even chance of going mad. The farmer took the fatal hint to heart, moped and pined over it, grew thin and melancholy, got suicidal mania, and finally died from nervous waste, of pure funk and superstition.

Now, what connection can all this possibly have with the origin of keepsakes?

Simply thus: when Ethel Montgomery gives Algernon Robinson a lock of her hair, gracefully folded in a neat little square packet of cream-laid note-paper, she is keeping up an old magical superstition, though she knows it not nor suspects it; and if she were aware that Algernon on his return to his solitary chambers in the Temple, after drawing it fondly out of his waist-coat pocket and gazing at it for a moment in rapture, very properly threw it into the fire (for of what possible use to any man but a hairdresser is an assorted collection of human locks?), she would probably consider the omen of evil import, and would fear, if not for her own safety, at least for the perfect prospective security of Algernon's affections.

The fact is, the giving of keepsakes, which now lingers on as a mere pretty sentimental custom, is in reality by origin a survival from a magic superstition, such as ancient love-making abounded in on every side. To give a person a lock of your hair, or, as in China, a paring of your finger-nail, is to show your perfect trust and confidence in him (or her) by putting yourself implicitly and entirely in his (or her) power and safe keeping. Whatever has once belonged to anybody, and far more therefore whatever has once formed an actual physical part of his person, puts its present possessor so fully *en rapport* with the original owner that he can to a great extent control that owner's destinies. In all magical ceremonies, whatever their purport—whether to avenge one's self upon one's enemy, or to gain the favour of the unkind and irresponsive object of one's affections, or to bring back the heart of one's now faithless lover—it is almost necessary to throw into the mystic caldron, or to burn with the fated image, a lock of the person's hair, or a rag of his clothing, or at the very least something or other that has once belonged to him.

Here is a little illustrative modern superstition which may help to make clearer the frame of mind that renders such strange forms of belief even now possible. It is known as the sympathetic snail trick. To communicate with your lover at a distance, take two snails, and feed them on lettuce in a box together for a week

or ten days before his departure for parts unknown. Then let your lover take one of the snails with him, while you keep the other in its box at home. Arrange beforehand a fixed day and hour for communicating with one another, and at that hour take your own snail out of its box and lay it on a slip of paper on which you have written out a copy of the alphabet. (It shows the antiquity of the superstition that the letters must be capitals, in Roman form, not in script hand.) Induce the snail to travel along the line up to the letter you wish him to halt at (the inducement usually assuming practical shape in the point of a pin), and then stop him. If the experiment has been properly performed, your lover's snail (put out similarly at the same moment, like a molluscan travesty of the Corsican Brothers) will travel along the corresponding slip and stop accurately at the same letter. You can thus spell out as many words as you choose in the exact easy and convenient fashion which the departed human spirit has independently invented for corresponding through the medium of a five o'clock tea-table with its surviving relatives. If the communication doesn't come off, that is because your absent lover, faithless man, has forgotten or neglected the appointed hour, or has ceased to love you, or has otherwise in some way or manner misconducted himself. Perhaps, also, in the case of places far distant from one another, such as England and Australia, sufficient care may not always be taken by the unscientific swain to ensure the correction of the local hour to Greenwich mean time; and the sympathetic snail may thus be made to walk about needlessly in his box at dead of night while his companion at the other side of the world is rejoicing in the full enjoyment of the antipodal noontide.

The general primitive belief of which all these scattered superstitions are isolated survivals was just this: that in every object and in every part of it there inheres a soul or other self; that this soul, being all present in all the parts, can be partially communicated with through any one of them; and that whoever holds in his hands such a part can more or less control the entire whole of which it once formed an integral element. For this reason superstitious people are very careful to burn the clippings of their hair, beard, and nails, lest these fragments of their own individuality should fall into the hands of any evil-disposed person or persons who might make use of them to the original owner's damage or detriment; and, *per contra*, affectionate and trustful people make over these small mementoes of themselves to the

care of those whom they love and confide in, at the present day, no doubt, for the most part without any consciousness of magical intent, but originally it is clear as a proof of confidence and a means of binding themselves closer to the person thus entrusted with the command of their entire life and destinies. They commend themselves bodily to the keeping of their lovers.

When you shoot a tiger, say savages generally, it is a good plan to eat his heart, because tigers are very brave, and their hearts will increase your bravery. On the other hand, it is not well to eat the heart of a hare, for its ingrained cowardice may succeed in making you equally timid; but you may safely eat his legs and thighs, for those will give you his well-known strength and speed in running. The heart of a brave human enemy, killed at last, is particularly recommended; to eat it (raw for choice) not only gratifies your natural feeling of personal revenge, but also incorporates in your own body all the feelings and powers and impulses that made him formidable. Mr. Gilbert's hero, in the lamentable tale of the *Nancy* brig, who summed up in his own person the mate and the captain bold, and the bo'sun tight, and the midshipmite, and the crew of the captain's gig, would at once have approved himself as a most logical reasoner to the intelligent comprehension of the ordinary savage. That you are what you eat is a piece of simple and elementary physiological knowledge which early appeals, however crudely, to the dawning ratiocinative powers of the unsophisticated black man.

Nor is it only the object itself in which the soul or essence is thus inherent; it clings also in a more shadowy form to the copy or image, the picture and the statue, the mere effigy or representative of the genuine individual. The Red Indians are much averse to having their portraits drawn or painted; they are afraid that some portion of their individuality must necessarily go forth into the striking likeness which a European artist so readily produces. A friend of mine, who rode with his camera on his back through the desert of Arizona, could hardly persuade the friendly natives of that inhospitable territory to come within reach to have their photographs taken. They thought perhaps the United States Government might make use of their likenesses for magical purposes against their persons and their landed property. Especially do most savages object to have their faces reproduced in profile. What has become, they ask innocently, of the other eye? and they have a shrewd suspicion that blindness or paralysis may well fall upon the luckless half of their own bodies not reproduced

in the peccant picture. This childish belief in the strong connection between the portrait and the reality is not confined to savages alone. If the portrait of the head of the house, done in oils on the dining-room wall (for some occult reason family portraits are supposed to haunt by natural congruity the precincts of the dining-room, as if perpetually hungry), happens to fall on the floor upon its face, everybody knows that the sad omen portends misfortune, financial and personal, to the prime original; and many a mother has cried her eyes red because the glass cover of baby's photograph in the frame on the mantelpiece has been shattered into a thousand pieces by Susan in her dusting operations among the pots and pipkins.

Sometimes, indeed, we manufacture an image or effigy specially for this very malignant purpose of affecting the life or limbs of its original; and such evil practices directed against others are commonly known as magic or sorcery. Thus, we dress up a little wax doll in the figure of a rival, and stick it all over full of pins so that the original may be racked and tortured with corresponding pains; or we melt it down before a slow fire so that he may similarly waste away by long degrees in some lingering malady. Burning in effigy, now a mere symbolic act of political disapprobation or personal dislike, remains among us to this day as a last relic of what was once a deliberate magical practice. The effectiveness of such sorcery is much increased if you can throw in an object actually once belonging to the menaced person, or still better a lock of his hair, or a paring of his finger-nails. But, in any case, you must call it by his name, for the name also, being almost, as it were, the very essence and sum of his personality, gives you great power over the destiny of your rival. On the other hand, the magical image may sometimes be made for less distinctly malevolent purposes than this; it may only be intended as a means to win over the heart of a cold young person or to bring back the affections of your faithless lover. In that case, you provide it with a little red waxen heart, of which the pierced hearts on our modern valentines are a final survival, and through the heart you stick an arrow as a sign or double of Cupid's dart. By this means you pierce the bosom of your cruel admirer, and compel him to give up your hated rival.

In the lingering customs of the Scotch Hallowe'en, we get the last degraded survival of these early magical superstitions. Here, the name alone for the most part does duty for the personality, and possesses all the supernatural power. For example, in one

such game, you take two chestnuts and lay them on the fire, saying, at the same time, 'Yon's Jock Graham,' and 'Yon's Jeanie Campbell,' as the case may be. When they get hot, they crack and jump. If they jump apart, then Jock's wooing of Jeanie will never prosper; if they jump towards one another, the course of true love will for once run smooth. It may be noted, in passing, that since by the doctrine of chances the number of jumps along every radius will on the average of instances be equal, and since only those jumps which occur within one quadrant of the circle will, as a rule, bring the nuts together, the odds against any particular marriage ever taking place are about as three to one, which is a bad look-out for the ordinary happiness of young couples. Many other like magical games are played on Hallowe'en and Christmas-eve, in most of which a person's name is given to some particular object, and its behaviour is then taken as symbolical or prophetic of the behaviour of the original whose name it bears.

Now, observe further, as casting light upon the origin and meaning of keepsakes, that many of these queer old superstitions linger on especially in connection with the business of love-making and marriage. From the very first, love and magic have been much mixed up with one another. The belief in philtres and love-potions, in the power of love charms, talismans, and amulets, and in the magical aid of the witch in love-making, has descended to the young girls of our own time from the remotest rites of prehistoric antiquity. The obeah of the West Indian negroes, a transplanted form of West African witchcraft, is almost all concerned with the light loves and ready jealousy of the pretty black lasses; the myal men are fortune-tellers and averters of unfaithfulness; and even the terrible voodoo worship of Haiti is all intermixed with strange superstitions of a strictly amatory and magical order. Our own English gipsies make a large part of their living out of the similar faith of servant girls and rustics in their power to predict the arrival of the expected rich and handsome suitor, or the successful catching of Giles's or Hodge's wavering heart. Fortune telling by the cards consists, for the most part, of the pregnant and exciting information that this fair young man, with money and affection, will marry this dark woman with diamonds, and this fair woman, disappointed, will be rejected, and will marry this cross, dark man. Superstitions of the kind linger on most of all among the class most profoundly interested in marriage—the class to whom the odd chance of securing a husband makes the greatest practical difference in life—young

women in domestic service, and country girls of the lower orders.

Of such beliefs, the keepsake is a natural and inevitable outcome. In our own time, of course, it has gradually merged into the mere present; but even now, as I shall shortly show, it retains many special features of its half-magical origin in its connection with love-making, its usual materials, and the peculiar occasions on which it is considered appropriate; while in the beginning there can be little doubt it was regarded rather as a pledge, a token, a charm, and a bond of union than as a mere gift or expression of affection. Mutual exchange of a binding object is at the bottom of it all; and in that form it still survives to a great extent among the lower classes. In old romance and fairy tale, what the hero gives the heroine is not a mere gold locket or a simple bracelet; it is a charm, a talisman, a magic chattel, by rubbing which she can at any time bring him from a distance to her side. The keepsake is a mode of putting yourself fully in the power of your lady-love, not an ordinary present or gift such as one gives to please a friend or to appease a hostile and dreaded chief.

A lock of hair is no doubt the oldest, commonest, and most effectual keepsake; and its use lingers on in many modified forms down even to our own time. For, besides the mere rough lock itself, it has given origin to the whole debased and degraded art of the ornamental hair decorator, who twines little plaits with scrupulous neatness into the hollow of rings, and manufactures wonderful brooches and mock cameo bracelets, with a weeping widow reclining under a weeping willow, and overarched by a gloomy bower of yew-trees and cypresses, all wrought (or said to be wrought) in the actual hair of the lamented departed. Observe here that this hair superstition, now etherealised by custom into a mere sentiment, a desire to possess something that was once a part of some one we love or loved, nevertheless betrays its true origin by its close connection with the two great springs of human faith and human religion, love and death. For while the keepsake lock is at first a talisman enabling you to preserve the love of your lover, the *In Memoriam* lock, I believe, is at first a talisman enabling you to keep up communications with the ghost of the departed, and even to some extent to control and compel it. The fear of the ghost was everywhere of old at the bottom of much which now remains as mere decent conventional ceremonial.

Look in this connection at the close analogy of the engaged ring and the mourning ring. The first is given at the moment

of betrothal; it is worn on a particular mystic finger; it was in old times engraved with the names of the two lovers, or with their initials intertwined in a monogram, or with some appropriate posy, or with a true-lover's knot—all of them now mere pretty sentimentalities, but all of them once of truly binding magical import. The second is given at the moment of death; it also is worn on a special finger; it often contains the hair of the deceased; it is marked inside with his name or initials; and though now specially manufactured for the purpose, it was once in all probability taken from the hand of the dead person. A ring that once belonged to an ancestor, or to a fairy, or to a powerful person, is a common amulet in all the old romances and folk-tales.

Note, too, the occasions and materials of the common keepsake. It is given on betrothal, on marriage, on a reconciliation, on going away for a long journey: in the last case, often taking the form of a ring with the Hebrew word 'Mizpah' engraved upon it—'The Lord judge between me and thee when we are absent one from the other,' says the gloss in the Bible—a bit of later religious symbolism overlying, as so often happens, a far deeper and earlier superstitious custom. Sailors, the most superstitious of men, and oftenest away from Poll or Sue, are great at love-tokens. They wear a charm on a silken string around their necks; they tattoo their manly arms with two hearts transfixed by a single arrow, and marked respectively 'Jack' and 'Molly;' and they believe, or pretend to believe, in the magic power of such symbolical unions to keep their affections true to their lady-loves against all the allurements of alien beauty. Moreover, the keepsake, besides containing as often as possible the hair of the beloved object, is almost always made of the precious metals or precious stones. There is a common though indefinite feeling that it ought to be something rather useless in gold or silver. It remains remotely true, in fact, to its amulet origin. Gold and silver and precious stones are of immense antiquity. Something to hang around your neck on a string; something to wear as a charm on your watch-chain; or, failing these, something in the way of necklet, bracelet, brooch, earring—that is the ordinary ideal of the keepsake. The ideal, in short, descends from a time when clothing was scanty, personal ornament was a matter of high importance, barbaric decoration alone was known, and goods and chattels were few and simple. We seldom think of giving as a keepsake anything that cannot be worn about the person.

There is just one form of the keepsake so especially interesting

from this point of view, and so closely interwoven with the line of thought we have throughout been pursuing, that I must just mention it in a little more detail before finally closing this present paper. I mean the common carnelian heart, so often suspended in the bunch of charms still worn as a pure survival at their girdle by many educated modern ladies. The heart, viewed as an emblem, seems to have two distinct origins. On the valentine, the sailor's arm, and the wax image, it is a heart, pure and simple: it stands for the central vascular organ, currently supposed in the popular unscientific physiological psychology to be the chief seat and physical organ of the tender affections. You stick a pin into the imaginary or symbolical heart of your enemy or your rival in order to kill or hurt him; you put a dart of love into the imaginary or symbolical heart of your own true lover in order to secure your undisputed possession of his faithful tenderness. But in the bunch of charms and in stonework generally the so-called heart is not by origin a heart at all; it is a rude imitation of the old neolithic chipped flint arrowhead. Such arrowheads, being dug up in the fields or exhumed from ancient barrows, have long been regarded as fairy darts. Having once belonged to the fairies themselves, they are of course valuable amulets; for if you possess an object that was some time theirs, you can by rubbing it bring them to your assistance, or can at least ward off their malignant attacks from your own person. In old romance and in the Arabian Nights it is by rubbing a lamp, ring, or charm that you summon to your aid the genii or the elves. Now fairies, as is well known to all and sundry, have a great deal to do with the art of bewitching, the evil eye, the falling sickness, soul milk, butter that won't churn, kettles that won't boil, and many other minor ills that bucolic flesh is specially heir to. Hence, by having a fairy dart in your possession, you can defy the fairies, or can even turn them from active enemies into powerful friends and personal patrons. This curious property makes the stone arrowhead a most valuable charm and also an exceedingly acceptable keepsake.

Accordingly, from very early times, a flint or carnelian dart has been a common object of superstition among all bunches of primitive charms. In the beautiful Etruscan necklets found in the tombs of Iar and Lucumo, such an arrowhead, of antique prehistoric workmanship, presumably fairy-made, usually forms the central ornament. In process of time, however, the necessity for its being an *old* arrowhead seems to have been forgotten, and brand-new polished carnelian darts got substituted (perhaps by the

fraud of the manufacturer) as the next best thing, on the mediæval necklet. Young ladies generally are not critical in the matter of antiques—these false darts thus replacing the true ones, gradually approximated, by a misconception, to the conventional heart shape, the barbs merging into the round valves, and the handle becoming at last a mere knob for the suspending hole. In the most degraded and modernised specimens of all, the knob has disappeared altogether, and the hole is drilled through the body of the heart. This substitution of one form of charm for another, both connected with what is at bottom the self-same superstition, is very interesting: it shows well the gradual gliding of the old magic into the modern sentimentalism, and the substitution of a purely emotional æsthetic idea for genuine barbaric mystical belief.

Is it not possible that even the photograph, last product of modern civilisation though it be, still retains, from one point of view, something of the same old-world superstitious fancy? It seems to us nowadays natural enough, to be sure, that one should wish to look in absence upon the face and features of those whom we love; but the special giving of photographs as love-tokens, and their enshrinement in the ordinary gold locket of civilised society, is perhaps a modified form of the old miniature, so familiar to all of us in our grandmothers' brooches. In the days when a mutton-chop-whiskered gentleman in a scarlet uniform was still regarded as a neat and appropriate ornament for a young lady's neck, the portrait on ivory was universally considered as a very touching acknowledgment of marriage or betrothal. And is it not likely that the miniature as a keepsake has in it something of the magical spirit? that in giving your portrait, you put yourself into the power of the holder, who ever after wears your counterfeit presentment as a charm next his or her heart? Its close connection with the locket and the lock of hair makes me half suspect this ultimate affiliation of the photograph, as a present, on the old animistic magical notions; but I don't wish to press the point too far. Of course, it must be frankly allowed that a hundred later strands of feeling have interwoven themselves slowly with all these elder forms of thought. All that one can now assert with truth is merely this, that the modern keepsake is still bound up with a thousand little instinctive conventionalities, which thus connect it in unbroken line with very ancient magical or mystical conceptions.

GRANT ALLEN.

## *Humble Bees.*

THE humble bees are a much-wronged and slighted family. Their showy relatives, the hive bees, make such a noise in the world that they have appropriated most of the attention which we have to bestow upon bees in general. The naturalist and bee farmer vie with each other in enlarging on the merits of the hive bee; the one extolling her as an example of intelligence and the other as a source of profit, they have together managed to induce us to devote to her an expenditure of printers' type which ought to satisfy the hungriest ambition for fame. But the poor humble bee, like most poor relations, has been sadly overlooked. Even the naturalist is inclined to treat her as he does ordinary moths and beetles, bestowing on her little more notice than is required to classify and describe varieties; and so the world follows suit and nicknames the poor bees in disparaging reference to their supposed inferior position in insect society—nicknames them, for the name humble bee is but a corruption of the true title bumble-bee, which, like the scientific generic term *bombus* from *βόμβος*, an imitative word, has reference to the booming sound made by the insect in flying.

The bee family has an interesting history. It is in all probability descended from certain solitary wasps which, like an existing species, were in the habit of providing living animal food for the young larvæ. Like a family of solitary wasps of the present day (*Cerceris bupresticida*) they probably possessed the power of stinging their animal prey so as to paralyse without killing it, laying an egg beside this living store of food, and leaving it to the prey of the resulting larva. The first step upwards was the abandonment of this habit, the more enlightened individuals taking to feeding the young with food disgorged from their own stomachs, the perfect insect feeding on honey or pollen. Hermann Müller states that the new race at first differed only in this habit, but in course of time, filling an unoccupied place in nature it increased enormously, and at last formed the widely ramified family of bees as we have come to know it. The steps in the development of

the family have been marked by the gradual elongation of the tongue and the adaptation of the mouth parts to honey-collecting habits, the acquisition and perfecting of pollen-collecting appendages, and the development of social instincts in some species. The steps may still be traced through surviving types, and Müller has sketched the development upward through the species of *Prosopis*, which differ little from many sand-wasps, *Sphecodes*, *Halictus*, *Andrena*, until the *Bombus* or humble bee family is reached, this being the nearest ally to the hive bee in which the series culminates. The resulting changes which have taken place elsewhere in nature *pari passu* with this change of habits in the bee family must be left to the imagination. Nearly all the endless variety of flowers with their perfumes and colours as we know them have since been evolved, as well as most of the beautiful arrangements for bee-fertilisation upon which thousands of species of plants are dependent for their existence. Truly very small causes sometimes have prodigious results! How many people know or realise that much of the variety in plants, most of the colours in our gardens, many of the perfumes on our toilet-tables, much of the beauty in many of our canvases, a good deal of the poetry in our language, and even a considerable development of the beauty-sense in ourselves result from that rather vulgar historical incident dated an æon or two back, when the young of the bee family left off a taste for butchers' meat and took to vegetarianism!

Sir John Lubbock puts forward on behalf of the ants what he calls a fair claim to rank next to man in the scale of intelligence, if they are to be judged by their social organisations, their architectural abilities, and their relations to other animals. Their relations the bees are, however, scarcely less interesting, and most of their wonderful habits must have been developed since they acquired their social instincts, since to the acquirement and development of these most of their importance is due. For this reason the present condition and habits of the humble bees are of special interest, for here we have, as it were, the starting point where we may see the community just in process of development, the social ties which hold it together being as yet of the loosest.

Everyone must, I presume, admit a general acquaintance with the humble bee. From the first sunny day in March to the last in September she is with us, industrious, contented, and entirely devoted to her own affairs, a worthy example to her betters. About forty species variously habilitated in artistic patterns in black,

red, brown, and yellow are known in the British Isles, and are familiar under various names—bumble bees, humble bees, dumble dors, wild bees, foggie bees, field bees, boom bees, hummel bees, &c. Most persons must also admit a general acquaintance with her habits, and will have seen her in early spring, sleek after her long hibernation, and big with the projects of maternity, curiously spying into dark corners in search of suitable quarters where she soon hopes to be mistress of an extensive *ménage*. The desirable building-site for which she is prospecting on these occasions is a retreat in the sunny side of a moss bank, or a nook in a stone heap, or an eligible rat-hole, according to the family notions on the subject prevalent among the species to which she belongs. If there are any who have not made the acquaintance of the humble bee at this stage of her career, there will be few at all events who can plead ignorance of the presence of the numerous family which she brings into the world later on in the year, the individuals of which diligently ransack most of our wild flowers, unconsciously the while providing for next year's crop of those glories of the field to delight the eye of the beauty-seeker and vex the soul of the farmer. The humble bee is, above all her sisters, nature's chosen high priestess to our indigenous flowers, good and bad alike; by her aid even the latest thistle blossom is secured against the risk of scattering its downy filaments innocuously on the wind. The humble bees, like the hive species, do not, however, thrive in all localities; this is perhaps due to the absence of particular flowers in certain districts; it is remarked that the hive bees will not prosper in a locality which does not produce an abundance of white clover—a plant upon which they largely depend for supplies during the swarming season.

No one is likely to confuse the humble bee with the hive bee, the smoother body and small size of the latter being in strong contrast with the large rough-looking and very hairy body of the former. The thick covering of hair on the body of the humble bee, besides its use in pollen collecting, is intended to be a protection against the weather, and it indicates the climatic distribution of the family. The genus *Bombus* is essentially a cold climate form, and it is particularly associated with the north temperate zone. The bees have, however, managed to extend themselves far beyond these limits; their familiar boom being heard all round the world, and at both sides of the Equator. In Europe they fly as far north as Lapland, and in Asia they extend from Northern Siberia to the confines of India. Most of

our species are found in North America, and some of them in the Southern Continent. They are, however, entirely unknown in Australasia. The native bee which takes their place in Australia is a puny, stingless weakling, resembling the aborigines, even to the extent that it is being rapidly exterminated by a higher civilisation, progress being represented by the hive bee imported from Europe. But to return to the history of the humble bee. When the queen issues forth in spring, after her long winter sleep, to found a new community, she, as soon as she has fixed upon a suitable spot to build in, collects a small store of honey and pollen as a provision for the first members of the family which she is about to bring into the world. When the queen bee of the hive species has made up her mind to start on her own account she issues forth from the parent hive followed by thousands of ready subjects. The swarm is, indeed, already a miniature state with a perfectly organised government, and with suitable quarters the machinery of government works smoothly from the first. With the queen mother of the humble bees the case is entirely different. As yet there is no state, and she has no subjects; she represents the whole in her own royal person; '*l'état c'est moi!*' is just now in her case literally as well as figuratively true. She lays at first a few eggs, and continues depositing at short intervals from half a dozen to a dozen at a time. These eggs all produce neuter workers, and directly the first bees hatch out they relieve the queen of all the inferior duties thrust upon her by the necessities of the situation. They are soon in the fields, collecting supplies for the increasing wants of the young colony, and the queen having resumed her proper position, she, like her sister of the hive species, in future devotes her attention solely to the production of eggs, her subjects taking charge of all the duties of nursing, food-producing, house-building, and defence.

My observation of the colonies which I have kept has always dated from about this stage. I have never been able to induce a queen to commence housekeeping under observation. I have kept the young queens from my nests till the following spring as well as those captured in the fields late in the autumn, and I have also tried with two caught in the early spring, but in all cases I have failed. My colonies have always been taken from the meadow.

On the sill of one of the windows of the room in which I am writing is a shallow wooden box open at the top, in which is established a flourishing colony of humble bees, one of four which

I have kept since last May. This is the third season in which I have had colonies of the humble bee under observation, and I have found them to thrive unexpectedly well in London. This colony in particular has flourished. Beneath the round moss-covered dome in the centre of the box it has stored up a supply of honey and pollen large for its kind, and, having brought into the world a numerous progeny of workers during the season, it is now hatching out an unusually large number of young queens and males to carry on the species next year. Bohemians as these bees are, it is curious and not a little interesting to see the intelligent active little creatures so much at home here, and to watch them coming to my window over the houses and trees laden with spoil. It is always a pleasing duty to bring deserving claims to notice, and I shall feel that I have discharged a duty if a pretty intimate acquaintance of the family affairs of the colonies which I have kept under observation will enable me to say anything which might tend to the removal of the badge of inferiority which by common consent seems to have been bestowed on the humble bee.

Those colonies which I have this year are just now (July) in the heyday of their prosperity. The one to which I have already referred is arranged for observation. The bees resent any interference with the nest during the daytime, but here beneath the shade of my reading-lamp I can remove the mossy dome, lined inside with wax and waterproof, exposing the busy scene underneath, without any hostile demonstration being attempted against me. After a few moments' perturbation the bees do not seem to miss the covering, and the work of the nest goes on as usual. It is an interesting sight. The bees are all employed in some way, some excavating round the edges of the nest to make room for the growing bulk within, others attending to the multitudinous duties connected with the shaping of cells and cocoons and the wants of the young larvæ. Even those which appear to be lazily stretched at full length over the cells are not lying luxuriously at their ease as might be thought, but are helping to keep warm the young larvæ within, assisting their development by a kind of incubation. The so-called honeycomb in the nests of the humble bee is a poor affair compared with the beautiful structure manufactured by the hive bees; it is not really of the same nature, but consists simply of the cocoons of the young insects irregularly fastened together. Some of those in the nest still contain the young brood, but others out of which the young insects have emerged have been used for the storage of honey. Those dark brown pro-

tuberances affixed in some places to the cocoons, looking like small accumulations of wax kept in reserve, have an interesting history; they contain the young bees in various stages of development before they spin their cocoons. The queen generally lays in one of the little recesses formed where two or more cocoons join, and the eggs are afterwards covered with a thin layer of wax and pollen, which the bees add to as the larvæ inside increase in bulk. Instead of each grub occupying a separate cell like those of the hive species, many are here wrapped together under a common blanket. It is easy to expose the eggs or larvæ underneath by raising the thin covering of wax with the point of a long needle, and it is amusing to see how the bees crowd excitedly round, and in a few moments repair the damage under one's eyes. They show some suspicion of outside influence, and even bite inquiringly at the needle as if not altogether satisfied that its innocent-looking exterior may not be a cover for hostile intentions. Some time ago, being curious to see, amongst other things, whether the young of the hive bee could be reared under the same conditions as those of the humble bee and *vice versa*, I made some trials with the eggs and larvæ of each. Among other experiments I placed some larvæ of the hive bee in one of the nests of the humble bees. Having carefully removed part of the waxen covering of one of the little groups of larvæ, I placed a grub taken fresh from the hive amongst the others, and covered the whole roughly up again, expecting that as usual the bees would complete the repairs, and so seal up the intruder with the others. I was, however, disappointed; they were not to be cheated in this way, and they would not repair the broken wax until they had smelt out the stranger, whom they dragged out and carried outside the nest, after which they repaired the breach in the usual way. Several times I tried, but with no better success. Unlike the ants, who will rear the young of other species, these bees would not allow the strange children of their betters to be fathered on them, and the helpless little aristocrats were always detected and dragged ignominiously out. As some species of the humble bee tolerate a kind of cuckoo bee (*apathus*), which lays its eggs in their nests to be hatched out with the offspring of the legitimate proprietors, whom they much resemble in appearance, I was not altogether prepared for this intelligent opposition to my ideas. Thinking that I might have better success with the eggs, I took some fresh from the hive and placed them amongst a little group just deposited by the humble

bee queen. The bees at first appeared to be rather puzzled at these eggs. One or two of them took them up somewhat aimlessly, and again replaced them as if they hardly liked to openly accuse their sovereign of misconduct, which they seemed to suspect. After a little hesitation a decision was arrived at. *Natura non facit saltum* was surely as safe a motto for bees as it is for philosophers, but instead of carrying the eggs out of the nest as they did the larvæ, the bees, one after the other, proceeded, apparently with considerable relish, to nibble them—a relapse into barbarism which, after ages of æsthetic culture, was quite startling—and so appreciative did they become of the flavour of these new-laid eggs that they would soon accept them readily when I offered them at the end of a needle. Once or twice I think I succeeded in smuggling some of the strange eggs in with the others, but, whether it was that the bees afterwards detected them, or that they were hatched out and the strange surroundings and low company proved too much for the refined tastes of the hive grubs, they never came to anything.

The wax which the humble bees use to stick their cocoons together, to plaster the inside of their nests, and sometimes to form rough cells to hold honey, is very dark, almost black when compared with the beautiful white material secreted by the hive bees. I think they mix earth with it, for I soon learned that my colonies did not flourish so well unless I provided a supply of earth kept constantly moist within reach of the bees, and in this they were constantly burrowing.

The humble bees never swarm; there is nothing amongst them analogous to what happens when a colony of hive bees with the queen at their head issues forth from the parent stock to found a new community. About the middle of July a colony is at its best. Up to this time nothing but workers have been produced in the nest, and the bees will have garnered a supply of honey and pollen which, in the case of the underground species, where the colonies are larger, will have assumed considerable dimensions. This is all, however, but a means to a great end, none of the present occupants of the nest having the slightest interest in its prosperity. They have borne the heat and burthen of the day only that others may reap the fruits of their labours. About the beginning of July a change comes over the queen. Hitherto she has produced only neuter worker bees or imperfect females, but now, whether by instinct or necessity is not yet clear, she commences to lay eggs

which produce only males and perfect females or queens in about equal proportion. When these attain to maturity the dissolution of the commonwealth is at hand. Neither the males nor the young queens take any interest in the affairs of the colony, and they both forsake the nest soon after they are able to fly. The males pass a brief roving existence, exhibiting a marked spirit of masculine independence, stopping out all day and all night too. They spend the sunny days in looking for their mates, till having fulfilled their mission in the world, they, like the workers, all die at the approach of winter. Only the queens remain, and these wander about till the cold weather warns them that it is time to search for a warm corner, where haply they may survive the winter to start the following year on their own account.

It is generally supposed that the old queen does not survive a second winter. Sir John Lubbock, indeed, mentions a case of a queen wasp of one of the social species, which resemble the humble bees in general habits, which he kept alive till the spring of the second season. The queen bee of the hive species it is well known lives and remains fruitful for several years. I have often missed the old queen from my nests towards the end of the year, and have often wondered what had become of her. One morning early in July last year I was watching one of my colonies at work when I was surprised to see the old queen come out unattended, and after a little hesitation fly away. I watched for a long time but did not see her come back, and as far as I could learn she did not return during the day. Next day I opened the nest. The colony was in a very flourishing condition; some young queens had just been hatched out, and there was a good deal of young brood in various stages of development and some eggs which had not been long laid, but, as I expected, the old queen was missing. She never returned, but the affairs of the colony went on as I should have otherwise expected until all the bees dispersed at the usual time. It is likely that the old queen is one of the first to leave the nest towards the end of the season, and it is not improbable that after spending the autumn like the younger queens she should in some cases survive till the second season.

As far as my observation of the humble bee goes I have found the individuals more intelligent than those of the hive bees. This may seem strange considering the work and the wonderful social organisation of the latter. Yet it is doubtless in result, to quote from Mr. Herbert Spencer, a question of altruism *versus* egoism. The specialised instincts of the hive bee have been for countless

generations developed on the strictest lines of altruism, that is for the benefit of the colony rather than of the individual bee. A glaring example of this altruism carried to its extreme limits is witnessed when the hive bee, Spartan-like in its public spirit, but pathetic in its stupidity, sacrifices itself on the smallest provocation for the good of the commonwealth, when it inflicts a slightly more serious wound by leaving its barbed sting, which it cannot withdraw, rankling in the flesh of the intruder, and dying itself from the injury caused by the loss of it. So it is with most of its instincts; they have been developed and specialised for the good of the community and do not necessarily imply what might have been looked for as a corresponding degree of intelligence in the individual. When the humble bees long ago branched off from the parent stock the individuals of the species were doubtless still so sunk in barbarism as to be quite incapable of even unconsciously entertaining any designs which had not a direct bearing on the interest of number one. The habits of the humble bee, still living a single-handed existence for a great part of the year, have made it necessary for her to retain a good deal of this primitive wisdom, and even to cultivate it. The development of the two branches of the family has been on entirely different lines. The humble bees in fact have not yet learnt to sacrifice the individual to the community, and despite their very rude social economy, and the popular prejudice against them in consequence, it is not at all improbable that we may have yet to allow that the individual humble bee is in advance of her cousin the hive bee in 'general intelligence.'

I need not refer amongst other things to the intelligence displayed particularly by the members of the underground species, in their ingenious plan of getting at the honey in some flowers by piercing the corolla, a habit which the hive bees are ready enough to take advantage of without having the intelligence to imitate it. There is a sense of individuality about the humble bee which it is hardly possible to attach to a single bee of the hive species. One sunny day last March I captured a large female of the species *Bombus terrestris* on the willows in the wood above Weston-super-Mare. Taking her to London with me, I placed her in an empty nest in which I had kept a colony the previous year, and having filled part of the empty comb with honey and given her a supply of pollen, I was in hopes that she might be induced to rear a young family under observation. I was, however, disappointed to find that beyond helping herself to the

honey she evinced no desire to take up her quarters in the vacant nest, and eventually despairing of success in my endeavour to reconcile her to her new surroundings, I gave up the attempt and let her have her own way. She then spent several days in beating against the glass of my windows in the endeavour to get outside. Being much from home at the time I took little further notice of her then, and soon missing her, I concluded she had found her way through the open window. One warm day some weeks after, as I was quietly reading in the room, I was a little surprised, on hearing a slight scratching noise near me, to observe her, engaged upon her toilette, perched beside me on the table-cover, out of the folds of which she had evidently just emerged. She had apparently taken up her quarters permanently there, for after a few short flights round the room she returned and eventually retired to her old quarters for the day. This was the beginning of a long and interesting acquaintance with my humble friend. Nearly every day during the early summer she came out, and her behaviour on these occasions was very curious. Her early experience with the windows had evidently made a great impression on her, and she never attempted to escape that way now. Sometimes indeed, after a long interval, she would fly towards the light, but before she reached the glass she invariably turned back from what she had evidently come to regard from painful experience as a delusion and a snare. She made short trips about the room all day, generally retiring in the evening to the folds of the table-cover. On these occasions her interest in the objects in the room was of a peculiar kind; the long confinement must have acted upon her as it often does on prisoners, when it leads them to take an unusual interest in objects they would not otherwise have noticed. All the bright objects seemed to attract her. The brass handles of some cupboards greatly interested her, and the polished knobs of a set of drawers were also a source of great attention. From time to time she would alight on one of these latter, and having walked all over it would fly to another and another without again alighting, as if she had been visiting flowers. She was on the most friendly terms with me, but I felt rather slighted to find that her interest in me was principally centred in the buttons of my waistcoat, which were made of some polished material, which doubtless attracted her like the knobs of the drawers. A great object of interest to her also was a bookcase, the backs of the books in which in various coloured bindings, labelled in gilt letters, were an unfailing source of interest. Here

again she rarely sought to approach the glass, but remained on the wing outside while she studied the gilt titles beyond. It seemed to me strange that she should return again and again to such a profitless occupation; yet she made many visits in the day to the same objects. I am inclined to think that in her visits to the bookcase the books which received most attention were those in green covers (there were very few in blue), although the rather florid lettering of some of the poets in red binding also seemed very attractive. The greatest object of attraction in the room was, however, the keyhole of the door. Into this she would try to squeeze herself, and failing, would alight near it and walk round and round it. It is no impropriety to say that the instinct which moved her here was essentially a feminine one, for she doubtless associated the small dark opening with the entrance which the females of her species usually choose for their underground nests. Acting on the hint, indeed, I afterwards took the discarded nest before mentioned, and placing it in a small wooden box entirely covered over, in the side of which I had previously cut a small opening, I fixed it in a prominent position and soon had the satisfaction of finding her enter and take permanent possession. She would not, however, be induced to breed, and one morning towards the end of May I found her dead in the nest, although she had a plentiful supply of food within reach.

During the few months this bee was with me her general relationship both to her surroundings and myself evidenced an individuality which we are not accustomed to associate with the members of the insect family. She certainly regarded me without fear, and I am inclined to think with some degree of favour. I used occasionally to stroke her with the end of a light feather, and she used at times to show her keen enjoyment of this by stretching at her full length during the operation, often putting herself in this position before the feather had touched her. At other times, very curiously, she would not submit to be stroked at all, and seeing me make preparation to do so, and while yet the feather was some inches distant from her, she would throw herself on her back and scratch and bite viciously, although she would allow me to take her in my hand without attempting to sting.

As already mentioned, one of my colonies contains an unusually large stock of young queens this year. I have fed the nest liberally during the year with pollen taken from the hive bees, and this may account for the superabundance of royalty. Royalty amongst the bees is not a matter of birth, but of breeding, or to

speak more correctly, of feeding. When the hive-bees want to manufacture a queen to order they take an egg or young larva, which under ordinary circumstances would develop into a neuter worker, and by special feeding and the necessary enlargement of its cell, it blossoms forth into a fully developed queen. In the bee-hive, indeed, the plebeian worker may at any moment in her youth have greatness thrust upon her, for as in the great Republic, the meanest citizen (if caught young and of the feminine gender) is eligible for the highest honour which the state has to bestow.

With the humble bees royalty is doubtless manufactured in a similar way. Anyone who has disturbed a nest towards the end of the year may have noticed that the workers are sometimes of various sizes. Those produced at the beginning of the year are often only slightly smaller than the queens, but towards the end of the season I have seen worker bees little bigger than house flies produced in the same nest with those large workers. It has been stated that the difference in size in these cases is due simply to difference in feeding during the larva stage, and if this be true, it means that those small workers produced later in the year are the stunted victims of the process of gorging to which the crop of young queens is subjected, the workers being robbed of their proper quota of food to supply the wants of what may not inaptly be called a bloated aristocracy.

This case of neuters or sterile females among the social hymenoptera is one of the deepest interest in all its bearings. Darwin, while explaining in the *Origin of Species* the action of natural selection here, has left it on record that the case presented to him difficulties which at first appeared insuperable, and actually fatal to the whole theory of natural selection. The question of sex among the humble bees is most interesting, as tending to throw some light upon the subject where it presents more difficulties, namely, amongst the hive bees. Amongst the humble bees the differentiation of sex has hardly begun. The queen performs the duties of an ordinary worker for part of the year, and the worker female differs little from her in anything beyond what may easily be understood as under-development consequent upon less generous feeding during the larva stage. But with the hive bees the divergence is far wider and more significant, involving not only difference in development but in instinct, and what is more important, in structure. The queen of the humble bees, like the neuters, possesses pollen-collecting appendages, and a

curved, almost unbarbed sting (which does not remain in the wound), which heritage she of course still transmits intact to her royal descendants and to the neuters. Now the queen of the hive species, besides differing altogether from the neuters in instinct, has lost, with other slight peculiarities, the pollen-collecting appendages, but she still preserves the power of transmitting them to the neuters, while on the other hand she has retained her curved unbarbed sting, but strange to say has acquired the power of transmitting an improved and more deadly weapon to the neuters. In the case of the neuters of the hive species it is interesting and not inexplicable that the peculiarities of instinct and structure which are correlated with sterility should be developed in them by the principle of natural selection acting on the community, though transmitted to them by the queen in whom such peculiarities have never been developed. This may be explained; for as in the course of time modifications of structure and instinct in the neuters were found to be advantageous to the community, there was a tendency for the fertile females in the communities in which those modifications were most pronounced to flourish, and so transmit to their fertile offspring a tendency to produce sterile members with the same peculiarities. Yet the most wonderful feature of the case remains to be mentioned, namely, that in the hive bees those peculiarities which the fertile female or queen transmits to her offspring can be controlled and profoundly modified simply at the will of the worker bees by the course of treatment to which the young insect is subjected while in the larva stage, so that from the same egg may be produced either an ordinary neuter—with pollen baskets and barbed sting—or a queen without the pollen-collecting appendages, which would be useless, and without the barbed sting, which would be a dangerous if not a fatal equipment.

That natural selection has been the *causa efficiens* in bringing about this remarkable combination of peculiar endowments working together for the good of the species, there can be no reasonable doubt; nevertheless, the mind cannot withhold its tribute of admiration when we consider the exquisite adjustment of means to that end here presented, and reflect what the steps must have been before the present advanced stage towards perfection had been attained.

The males of the humble bee are an interesting section of the community. They differ in colour from the females and are more brightly marked, but it is peculiar that there is no permanence of

pattern, the males of the same species differing in the arrangement and intensity of the colours displayed. Besides other structural peculiarities they possess much longer antennæ than the females, and like the drones of the hive bees they are not armed with a sting. Comparing them with these latter one cannot help being struck, here as elsewhere, with the greatness of the penalty which the individuals amongst the hive bees have had to pay for the social organisation which has contributed so much to the success of the species in the great struggle for existence. The male bee of the *Bombus* family is still far from having become the helpless, pitiful creature which we find his male relative the hive drone to be. True, nature has already made it clear that he is a creature of infinitely less importance to her than the females who are to carry on the species; but beyond this he is not to be despised. Although he has no sting he submits to no dictation from the neuters in the nest, for he leaves it immediately, and what is more important, he is under no necessity of returning, for he can forage for himself among the flowers, and he is not therefore like the hive drone, reduced to that most dismal of all necessities—sponging on unwilling relations. He enjoys himself in an independent way while he can, and he is not likely to remain long unmated. The poor degraded hive drone suffers much in comparison; he has fared badly while the great principles of free competition and *laissez-faire* were winning for his species a worthy place beside the ants. The hive drone is produced and maintained by the colony for one purpose, and all his instincts which do not tend directly or indirectly to further that single purpose have been retrograding. He has lost most of what intelligence his kind ever possessed; he has lost the power of seeking his own food, being helplessly dependent on the earnings of the colony. Of his miserable life the bees are so contemptuously generous that for one queen which requires to be mated they generally produce at least one hundred drones, ninety-nine of which, excluding accidents, live to be ruthlessly slaughtered by the bees at the end of the season. The favoured one which meets the queen on her marriage flight pays the penalty of being chosen to such a lofty destiny. The queen returns to the hive alone, and during her life remains true to her first love, but her elect returns no more; he has been the hero of a love tragedy, and even *in articulo mortis* has become the father of a mighty host. This peculiar fate, which happily is rare in the animal kingdom, is, however, said to be shared by the male of

the humble bee, but here I cannot speak from personal observation.

Has the present condition of the humble bees and their evolution to a higher social development any bearing on other questions? The family or clan stage of social development is represented in the village communities of the humble bee, still held together by the loosest ties. The independence and welfare of the individual is still preserved, and the community still largely exists for the individual and not the individual for the community. But with the hive bees the individual has ceased to be of much account; even its life is wantonly expended, as, for instance, in order that the colony may secure the infinitesimal advantage derived from the slightly more serious wound inflicted when the worker leaves her barbed sting in the flesh of an enemy; one-half the community (the neuters) are unsexed, and the other half (the drones), while preserving their sex, have lost nearly everything else to become the degraded victims of the meanest kind of slavery. But the species has prospered, the government is highly centralised, and the state is rich, populous, and powerful beyond comparison with its less civilised competitors. What are the lessons? Has progress been dearly bought as we should count the cost?

BENJAMIN KIDD.

## *My Strange Mother-in-Law.<sup>1</sup>*

ILLINOIS, U.S.A., is my native state, and if my early home was not altogether luxurious it was at any rate comfortable, and from my youth up I was accustomed to many amenities of life, which in my present strange home are visions of the past. As I grew up it was obvious that I must do something to earn my living, for though I had a fair face, which I believe some people called pretty, yet I could not trust to that alone. I was taught well, I passed examinations well, and in the natural order of events I became a teacher in a school—in other words, ‘a school ma’am,’ as they called me out there.

When I was just over twenty-one I was persuaded against the wishes of my parents to enrol myself as a member of a society the primary object of which was missionary work; every member agreed to consecrate twelve of the best years of his or her life to attempt to stem the current of idolatry and superstition with which the world abounds, and to further the spread of the ‘pure milk of the Word’ in that part of the globe which suited him or her best.

We women generally entered into this society with wild schemes in our heads about emigrating in a body to the Cannibal Islands, the Hottentots or Timbuctoo, but these schemes generally ended in one of two ways—we either paired off with one of the men and entered on the arduous task of a missionary’s wife, or, humbled in aspirations, we returned to the bosom of our families. My fate was the former of these two. A young Greek emigrant with so long a name that I can only just pronounce it now after over five years of married life asked me to become his wife. He had lately joined our society, and was commonly known as Mr. Paul, for, thank goodness! his Christian name is pronounceable, though he always laughed at us in America for the way we said it.

When married I was known as Mrs. Paul, and I neither hope nor expect my friends to master any other name that may be attached to me, except the following:—Sarah Folger Paul; Folger

<sup>1</sup> The facts of this narrative were communicated to me by the missionary and his wife during a short stay I made under their roof, when in the island of Andros.

being my maiden name, which we Americans always retain for the sake of identification.

Before we were united Paul propounded his scheme to me for missionary work, and I must say I thought it charming, though many's the time since that I have wished we had chosen to convert the most inveterate cannibals: we could not have disagreed with them more than my mother-in-law disagreed with me for the first year of my acquaintance with her. Poor old thing! I sometimes shudder at the sight of her even now.

'Sarah,' Paul said to me one day, 'nowhere on the globe is there more ignorance or idolatry than in my own native island, in my own village of Katakailos, high up in the mountains of Andros. Our twelve years of mission life could not be passed in a more profitable way than in trying to show my own people the error of their ways. We will start as soon as we are married, if the president of our society will only give us leave.'

'Tell me all about it,' said I, enraptured at the thought; and he told me with a sigh how his old mother still lived in the cottage on the mountain slope where he was born; that she was a person of great reputation for many things which we should call uncanny; and that it was the wish of his life to see his old mother lead a better life before she died.

'It will be a difficult task,' he said, 'for the Andriotes are as deeply wedded to their superstitions as the Buddhists to their creed.'

But I saw none of those difficulties. I was in high glee at the idea of going forth into the world to Paul's old home. That very night I got down my well-thumbed atlas, and, instead of turning as usual to Polynesia and Africa, I studied the map of Greece, and found that Andros was one of the Cyclades, almost touching Eubœa, and covered with black mountain lines. I cannot tell you how many plans I made for converting my mother-in-law in the course of the next few days, and I put down on paper what I thought to be valuable ideas suggested in moments of inspiration. These ideas I have still in my desk, and whenever Paul and I are dull I get them out and read them aloud, and they always cause us amusement.

So we were married, and our passage taken for the scene of our European mission-ground. Our friends gave us heaps of presents—things that they thought would be useful and ornamental in our new home. I need hardly say that the box containing ornaments remains still packed; but there was one present which I value above everything—it is a warm padded quilt worked

in a small chess-board pattern, on the white squares of which all my old scholars and friends marked their dear names in marking ink. There is Baby Rodgers and Sister Daly—over a hundred of them. Sometimes I stare at this quilt for an hour at a time, until my eyes get so wet with tears that I can see no more.

On our voyage Paul busied himself in trying to teach me colloquial Greek, after a parrot-like fashion, which I, who had got prizes for proficiency in French, resented as beneath me. One of our kind friends had given me before starting his school Greek Grammar, hoping it would be of use. So I worked very hard on the sly to learn *τύπω* and all its conjugations as a surprise for Paul; but he only laughed at me, and called me a little fool when I handed him the book triumphantly, which hurt me very much, and at the time I really felt quite indignant with him; but now I know that he was right.

We spent a few days very pleasantly in Athens, where everything charmed me. It was such a delightful sensation to see these towns of the old world, the works of art, and the ruins. When I stood on the Acropolis and looked around over the seas and mountains of Greece I felt an indescribable pride in feeling that now I too was a Greek, married to a countryman of Pericles and all those grand old heroes of whom I had read and taught so much. We went a little into society, and I listened in mute amazement to Paul as he talked and argued in his native tongue; but though I could not tell what they said, I felt sure that the Greeks did not receive Paul's scheme of conversion with any favour.

At Syra we made our final preparations for our departure from civilisation. Paul bought a lot of what I thought very dear and very badly made household utensils, and he chartered a caique which was returning to Andros to convey us and our baggage to the harbour which was nearest to our future home.

When we embarked in Syra harbour I felt nervous for the first time. Now I felt that the time had come when I was to be introduced to my husband's family, when I was going to throw in my lot with them for twelve long years, perhaps for life, and as yet I could hardly say a word in their tongue, and I was bound by my vow to use every effort to convert them from evil ways of which I had the vaguest idea. Paul told me how the country people in the wild island of Andros prayed to pictures of the Madonna and saints; how the wicked priests pretended to find miracle-working treasures in the ground; and how priestly curses and blessings, the evil eye, and lots of other absurd things, kept the people in a thralldom of darkness. But as yet I could only

spell out the very easiest texts in my Greek Testament, so I felt that for the present the only good I could do would be by my example, and by observing a quiet and conciliating demeanour.

We had a fearful voyage—just like the one St. Paul must have had in these very seas; and I could not help remarking it as a coincidence of good omen that my husband bore the name of the great apostle who came to convert these very Greeks from their pagan superstitions. A gale from the north sprang up before we had rounded the northernmost point of Syra, so that we had to land on a bleak rocky promontory four hours distant from the town, which could only be reached by a fearfully rocky road, and which I must not attempt to walk, Paul said; so we had to stay where we were for six weary days and nights, in drenching rain, with hardly anything to eat; but this rather pleased me than otherwise, for in those days my one fear was that our self-imposed mission-field was too easy, and I courted anything like discomfort.

In due course we reached a little harbour in Andros, which Paul said was about a two hours' mule ride from Katakoiolos, up in the mountains which towered above us. I felt so nervous and frightened when I saw the queerly dressed crowd collected on the shore, men and women who rushed forward to embrace Paul; the women wore long loose dresses of a coarse homespun material like dressing gowns not gathered in at the waist; these did not come down to their ankles, and their legs and feet were bare. The men wore loose knickerbockers of calico, with a loose bag between their legs, which flopped about, and red fezes. I could almost have screamed when they came forward to embrace me as Paul's wife. I wondered how many of them were my new relations, for Paul was so busy talking and greeting, that he had not time to think of me. I tried to smile, and not feel annoyed when the women stroked and petted me and called me a *κούκλα*, which Paul afterwards told me was the Greek for 'a puppet' or 'a doll,' and considered a great compliment.

The women examined everything I had on—my bonnet, my gown, my petticoats; and without the faintest grain of modesty they began to handle and discuss the texture of my innermost garment, which was more than flesh and blood could stand when there were so many men around us, so I called out to Paul to save me, but he only laughed at me, and said that the women of Andros do not know what modesty is, and as an instance of this he told me about the following horrible practice they have on the first of May. Andros is a mulberry-growing island, and in former

years used to produce a large quantity of silk, and it is their superstition and diabolical belief that if the wife of the owner of the trees appears on the flat house-top at the rising of the sun on May morning without any clothes on at all, the crops will be good and the silkworms flourish. Now that the silk trade is at an end, they only make an intoxicating spirit of the mulberries, which makes their conduct even worse.

I think all our friends were insulted when we would not drink raki or wine with them, which they brought as a greeting, for Paul and I are teetotallers, as becomes our calling; but we took some coffee and jam with them, and Paul made pretty speeches for us both, whilst I smiled, but I felt sure that they were displeased at our not drinking any of their spirits.

'Everyone gets drunk at the feast of the wanderer's return, the *νόστος*,' said Paul, thoughtfully; 'so to-night we shall have to make our first effort of example.' Somehow the aspect of affairs made my heart sink within me very, very low, as I mounted a mule, and we set off on the rugged mountain path to our new home. I was much enchanted with the view, and consequently forgot my nervousness for a time. Katakailos is the quaintest, dearest little village imaginable, like a long white snake straggling for a mile or more up the steep slopes of a mountain, with houses nestling amongst olives, and mulberries, with a few tall cypresses to break the line; deep down below us was a dark rocky gorge; behind us towered the mountain ridge which forms the backbone of Andros; in front of us were the snow-capped peaks of Eubœa; to the right and left of us were extensive views over the sea dotted with islets.

'This is Paradise,' I whispered to Paul, desirous of letting him think I was happy and pleased. 'Where only man is vile,' replied he, quoting from our hymn-book, which remark made my heart sink very low again; 'for,' thought I, 'if Paul can speak thus of his kinsfolk, they must be bad indeed.'

'My mother lives up in yonder house—the last house in Katakailos on the mountain side;' and by looking in the direction in which he pointed I could distinguish the low flat-roofed cottage which was to be my future home. We toiled up the village on muleback, making quite a triumphal procession, for everybody was on the alert to greet the wanderer and his strange bride; but we passed them all by without stopping, for Paul said to them, 'We must greet my mother first.' For this I was glad; but with a strange faintness of heart and trembling knees I alighted at my mother-in-law's home.

There she was at the threshold, a tottering old crone, such as I had seen in pictures, with a dirty white handkerchief over her clotted hair, tied round her chin, so as to hide the greater part of her yellow wrinkled face; her dress was ragged, of homespun blue, which came down just below her knees; her legs and feet were bare, and covered with distressing sores which they call *drymès*, and which come, they say, from washing during the first six days of August. Paul afterwards explained to me how nothing is washed here during those days, for linen, they believe, gets holes in it and limbs get sores. I wondered very much that my mother-in-law had ever washed at all, but Paul laughed and said it was probably an accident, and that most likely she had spilt some water on her legs during those days, which had had this effect. Every night she says incantations over them, and flatly refuses to allow me to dress the sores; but I am anticipating. She did not advance to meet me, but glared at me as if expecting me to do something, whereat Paul said, 'You must humour her whims and receive her blessing.' Thereupon I knelt before her, and heard myself entrusted to the charge of the Virgin, and many saints, for I could clearly distinguish the names; so I said to Paul, 'We must not begin our missionary work by encouraging idolatry,' whereat he said something to his mother which threw her into a towering rage. She could hardly speak for passion, and instinct told me that now I was being cursed instead of blessed, and with a sickness and horror I entered my new home.

I think nothing I had as yet seen in Andros gave me more entire satisfaction than the misery and squalor of my new abode. I now felt that I was doing something really meritorious. The floor was of pressed mud; there were two small windows without any glass in them; there was no chimney to let out the smoke of some embers on which a pot of herbs was boiling; the atmosphere was thick and fetid. In one corner stood a rude bedstead, the clothes on which looked as if they had not been washed during the lifetime of the present generation; a few broken pots lay about, and a bench. But what shocked me most was to see a few quaint badly drawn pictures of saints in a corner of the wall, and a lamp burning before them. I felt a missionary's wife in earnest now; the dirt and squalor I was prepared to face, and for the saints we should soon substitute texts of Scripture.

I was quite sorry when Paul said apologetically that he would have the house put in order for me before the winter came on; a boarded floor a stove, a new bed, chairs, and glass in the windows,

and our other comforts we had brought from home would soon convert this hovel into a comfortable cottage, 'for,' argued he, 'we shall have enough hardships to go through in other ways;' and now I think I understand him thoroughly.

We had not been long in the cottage when in walked the village priest to give us his greeting. My mother-in-law stooped down, touched the ground with her fingers, and then kissed his proffered hand. Paul shook him warmly by the hand, and I bowed stiffly, for I felt that now we were having an interview with the general of the hostile camp. After a little conversation, which I could not follow, I became aware that they were talking about me, and from words I caught I could tell that the priest was urging that I should be baptized and married according to the rites of the Greek Church, which of course Paul said was utterly impossible; and then followed some acrimonious remarks, from which I gathered that the gauntlet had been thrown down, and that the priest had picked it up, for he went away looking exceedingly angry, and my mother-in-law went into alternate fits of sobbing and rage; for, as Paul explained, these benighted people believe that a priest's curse is productive of any evil he likes to inflict on his enemies—sickness, loss of money, and general blight.

On that day my mother-in-law kept making signs and passes at me, now cursing, now smiling. I could have screamed with terror and dismay, for, there was no doubt about it, the old woman was a witch, and though if you had asked me if I was afraid of witches a week before I should have laughed at the idea, when brought into immediate contact with one, and that one my mother-in-law, the case was altered altogether.

'Alas! poor old mother,' said Paul, who was much distressed at my agitation; 'for years she has established an unholy reputation for skill in magic art; if anybody is ill in any of the villages around Katakailos she is sent for, and for nearly every disease she has her blasphemous incantations. There is the incantation for sunstroke—a wild, weird rhyme to be muttered with certain strange measurements of her handkerchief; there is the appeal to Christ and the apostles, reckoned efficacious in colic and diseases of the stomach; she has her charmed florin, which she puts in a mug of water in the air all night with the idea that money attracts that vital force in the air which regenerates life; she knows the value of every herb on the mountain—the virgin's hair for fevers, the mandrake, thyme, and hosts of others; and many is the

drachma she gets out of silly young girls and lads for mixing them love potions or telling them devices by which to attract and conquer the object of their desires. I remember just before I left Andros a girl who was going to be married came to my mother and asked her what she must do to get the upper hand of her husband. The magician replied, "If you tread on his left foot with your right at the moment that the ring is being put on your finger you will be the mistress." The silly girl paid my mother two drachmas for this rubbish and put it into practice so clumsily that her husband suspected what was up, and on returning from church he beat her till she confessed; whereupon he came and gave my mother a terrible scolding, and made her refund the two drachmas under the threat of taking her all the way to the town to have her tried for extortion.'

'And what happened to the poor beaten bride?' asked I sympathetically.

'She is now as meek and obedient a housewife as anyone could wish to have,' replied Paul, laughing at the interest I took in this case.

As we busied ourselves unpacking a few of our comforts, my new-found relative sat like a bundle of old clothes in a corner warming her skinny fingers at a charcoal brazier, for up here the evenings were already cold, though it was not the end of September. She muttered to herself all the time, and scowled at me as if she would wither me with her glare.

Towards nightfall the neighbours came in with baskets full of food and gourds of wine, for it is the custom here to celebrate the return of a compatriot with a riotous feast, the provisions for which the friends and neighbours provide. Paul met them all kindly, but refused their gifts and promised orgie by saying that we were tired and wished to retire to rest. I never shall forget their faces of disgust. They looked at the old mother as if for an explanation; she said something in an angry voice and pointed at me. I felt more wretched than I can describe that night; we had only been a few hours in our home, and in that time we had made an enemy of everybody. Even Paul looked dejected, but said that we must take up our stand at once as we intended to live, and by degrees, when we had proved by our lives that we were not evil or affected by priestly curses, perhaps then they would listen to us. Never did bride have such a welcome to her husband's home. Our friends were not to be disappointed of their orgie; they repaired to a neighbouring cottage and made night

hideous with their drunken yells, and some too came and sang insulting songs outside our door, which terrified me, though I did not understand what they said.

For days I never saw a soul except Paul and his mother. She would not come near me, and hissed at me in such a hideous voice if I approached her that I could not help screaming. When Paul went out for hours together to get the materials necessary for improving our home I felt in constant terror lest the old crone should really exercise some spell over me, for in those miserable days I think I even began to believe a little in necromancy, and at times I wondered if perhaps after all this old woman's curses might not smite me with something dreadful.

I was afraid to go out alone, for one day when I did so to get a breath of fresh air on the hillside, and I had wandered unconsciously some distance from our house, I became aware that the whole village was following me at a most respectful distance indeed; but I grew very frightened, and, not daring to turn back I walked on and on until I was tired, and then I sat down on a stone, unable to go a step further. I was thankful to find that the people never ventured nearer to me than fifty yards, and as time went on they went away one by one, and I was at liberty to return home alone. Evidently I was supposed to have the evil eye, or something of that sort, and I was secretly rather glad, though I felt that my duties of converting the people under these circumstances would be doubly difficult.

'This must be lived down,' said Paul gaily from day to day, for his spirits were wonderful, and he was very busy improving our house; but at that time I would have given anything to have been amongst the cannibals and the Hottentots, and not amongst my dear Paul's relations and friends of his youth.

There was a terrible excitement in Katakailos about a month after our arrival; a young girl had died and been buried, and was now walking about as a ghost, they said. Paul's mother told him triumphantly that as she was walking by the grave the other day she distinctly heard the bones rattle in it. These Andriote ghosts are extraordinary things: they have a long difficult name for them almost as hard as my own, and they say if a man dies without making peace with an enemy, if he is cursed by a priest, or dies without the last offices of religion, his body cannot rest in the grave—it cannot decay, and refuses to mingle with mother earth; so this wretched wight returns night after night to his old home and spreads diseases and terror amongst his surviving

relatives. This evil spirit can only be appeased, so they think, by a process of priestly incantation to appease the manes: the priest prays on the grave, pours sacred oil thereon, and if this be not sufficient they exhume the body, cut out the heart and, having burnt it, scatter the ashes to the winds.

This latter fearful process went on now with the body of the unfortunate girl about whose ghost everybody in Katakailos had some story to tell. My mother-in-law was in the greatest state of excitement on this occasion, being present at the ceremony, and I have no doubt adding terror to the scene by her wild grimaces and unearthly noises.

In spite of my terror of Paul's mother, I tried to be scrupulously kind to her, but Paul was not always as kind as he should have been to her considering she was his mother; for he would deliver her lectures on her iniquities, forbade her to drink wine in the house, and by harsh measures I think he rather confirmed her in her antipathy to me and made my mild attempts at conciliation abortive. Yet Paul was always cheerful in spite of everything, and one day confided to me that he really began to hope that some good results might come in the end; for in America he had studied medicine to some extent—in fact, it is a rule of our society that no one should go on a missionary expedition without a knowledge of drugs—and he was successful in many cases which incantations and nature failed to cure. This was a source of the greatest annoyance to his mother, who one day got hold of his medicine-chest and poured all the contents away, so that he had to write to Syra for a fresh supply. Paul was often called to distant cases, and during all this time I was in constant dread of his being molested or even murdered by some of our many enemies. When he was out late I got into an agony of fright.

One night, having gone to a great distance, he never came back at all, and I thought I should have died of anxiety; my mother-in-law sat in her usual crouching attitude—for she likes nothing better than to sit on her heels—and chuckled as I paced about the room and went from time to time to the door to try if I could see him coming up the hill.

'Perhaps the Nereids have got him; perhaps the Lamia of the mountains has struck him dead; perhaps he is burning now in the fiery river where all go who desert the orthodox Church and neglect the saints.' Unfortunately for myself, I could understand nearly all she said now; but when I tried to look calm and tell her that he was in good keeping and that God would protect him

she only laughed drily and went on muttering a story about a shepherd who had been carried away by the Nereids in a cloud and had been found insensible hours after and never recovered the shock. It is quite true what Paul told me: the Greeks of these island mountains are little better than their pagan ancestors, for they believe in Charon, Tartarus, and all those mythical beings—nymphs, Nereids, Lamiaë, &c.—about which we all learn at school; and it is sad to think of the religious superstitions that the priests encourage, blending all the old pagan ideas with Christianity in an appalling manner.

Paul came back next day all right, rather to his mother's disgust, I think, for she shows no kindly feeling for her only son, looking upon him rather as a rival who runs a good chance of spoiling her nefarious trade.

I never shall forget the awful time I went through when baby was born, though I think that event contributed more than anything else towards softening my mother-in-law's heart. She was terribly fussy as the time drew near, and was always burning horrible things in the stove, which Paul said were charms, and which made our small house smell fearfully; but I was content to humour her in these fancies, and thereby I think gained much in her favour, for she left off scowling at me, and one day she actually called for me to search for something which was making her head itch; it nearly made me sick, but strange to say this was the first thing I did for her that in any way seemed to please her. When the weather was cold I gave her a small knitted shawl to put on her head, hoping thereby to get rid of the filthy rag she usually wore, but it was no use, she tore it up and threw it away.

It was very seldom that Paul got into low spirits, but once or twice he made me very sad, for he said it went to his heart to see his old friends cross themselves and get as far from him as they could when he passed by; and because the priest had cursed us publicly everybody refused to work for us, though we offered to pay them handsomely; so we had to get a labourer from Syria and have all our food brought from there by boat. No one can have any idea of the isolated life we led, except now and again men would come in secretly and beg Paul to go and see a sick relative; they generally came at night for fear of the priest knowing, but by the cures he effected he was slowly establishing a hold over people, and he hoped with patience to live down our persecution.

Baby was born in the summer after our arrival, and his grandmother took the most lively interest in him, for he was a fat, chubby boy, with fair hair, like mine. She always maintains that she caused him to be a male child by fastening a sprig of a mountain herb over my bed, which they call 'male flower.' The Greeks think it quite a curse to have a female child, and rejoice accordingly when a male is born. I remember seeing this sprig and also an olive branch called the 'Virgin's Hand,' which she wished me to hold in my hand, but I refused, knowing she meant some silly superstition; and now I wish that I had made her take them both off my bed, for it cannot but be sinful to call a simple branch of olive by such a name as that and suppose that any good can come by it.

It was all Paul could do to prevent her from running off with the child and getting it secretly baptized by the priest. But my husband was very good and attentive all that time, and never went away from the village, though a sick person wanted to see him over the mountain at Arni; and I am sure if he had gone granny would have had our little one baptized.

I think I was more than ever in dread of my mother-in-law now, though she was becoming much kinder to me than she was at first; but she had such queer notions about children, and was always trying to give baby some horrible concoction of her own. The poor child, a few months after he was born, got a sore mouth—a disease called 'aphta' by the Andriotes—why, I do not know. At night-fall, when I was not looking, cunning old granny caught hold of the child, and, after spitting on to its sore mouth, exposed my poor little darling to the stars, muttering these words: 'This evening stars and aphta, to-morrow no stars and no aphta.' When I, rather triumphantly I must say, called her attention next morning to the fact that baby's mouth was, if anything, a little sorer for her treatment, she replied with confidence: 'Ah, if only I could have got a sailor who had been round Cape Malea to spit on baby's mouth when there was a new moon, the aphta would have been cured at once.' Really grandmamma was incorrigible and a terrible anxiety to me in those days.

One day, when baby was about six months old, I had a horrible fright. He had been ailing, poor little thing, for some days, and granny, I felt sure, was meditating one of her horrible cures. So I never left him out of my sight for a moment, if I could help it. However, one afternoon, when Paul was out, and my attention was temporarily attracted to something else, granny took up the

child and darted out of the house and up the hillside before I could stop her. I followed, breathless, and screaming as loud as I could, but granny paid no heed, and with her rapid strides she quite distanced me; for, old as she is, from constant habit and knowing the paths she can climb the hills much faster than I can. After a weary pursuit up and down hills, across rocky gorges and cliffs, which at any other time I don't think I could have climbed, I arrived just in time to see my poor little darling being passed naked through a queer hole in a rock, which Paul told me afterwards is held in great reputation by superstitious mothers, who think that by passing delicate children through this hole naked and putting fresh clothes on they thereby counteract the effect of certain sprites they call Nereids, who wither children with their glance and are the cause of most infantile maladies.

Never was any poor mother so tried as I was by the interference of a mother-in-law. In spite of lectures from Paul, she would not leave our child alone. I lived in perfect dread that some day she would poison him with her drugs; but Paul cheered me by saying that she had never poisoned him, and he had been exposed to similar treatment.

I could tell you heaps of things she did which would only interest mothers, but baby survived them all, and now his nose has been put out of joint.

We have now been five years in Andros, and, as Paul prophesied, we have lived down our persecution; everybody has seen for themselves that if the priest did curse us his curse has had but little effect upon us; so one by one the neighbours gained courage, and began to come to our house and to chat with us as we went by. Paul is now openly consulted as the great medicine man of the place, and I have got a harmonium, the thing I love best in life after Paul and the children. I play upon it every evening, and sing Moody and Sankey's hymns; and you should see the delight my music gives to these wild people, who crowd into our little house after their work is done to hear me sing, for our music is so very different to their hideous nasal drawls, which nearly drive me wild with their monotony. So we have conquered our persecutors by two means—medicine and music. I am convinced that without these we should have lived on and on as outcasts from our fellow-creatures.

But if you ask if we have made any progress in the object for which we came, I must candidly answer—no. If Paul broaches the subject of religion to a sick man on his deathbed, he refuses

to listen, and any attempt at undermining the priestly authority is met with stolid opposition or rude remarks; and sometimes I ask myself, Is it well to shake the implicit faith in what their priests teach? Is it not dangerous to tell ignorant, illiterate men that they have been brought up to believe in a pack of lies? If they once recognise this fact, will they ever believe in anything again?

My mother-in-law still lives, and is in the enjoyment of excellent health. She is cowed, but not conquered, by her son. Never was there so cunning an old soul as she is. In spite of all that Paul can say, she insists in concealing gourds full of wine under her bed; and when our backs are turned she will give strangers a glass of this to drink, for her antiquated ideas of Greek hospitality are greatly scandalised at our offering only coffee or water. She practises her quacks and her incantations as vigorously as ever on the sly. She is, I fear, incorrigible; and even now I cannot help shuddering when I hear her mumbling to herself, when busy with her magic spells.

J. THEODORE BENT.

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### *The 'Donna.'*

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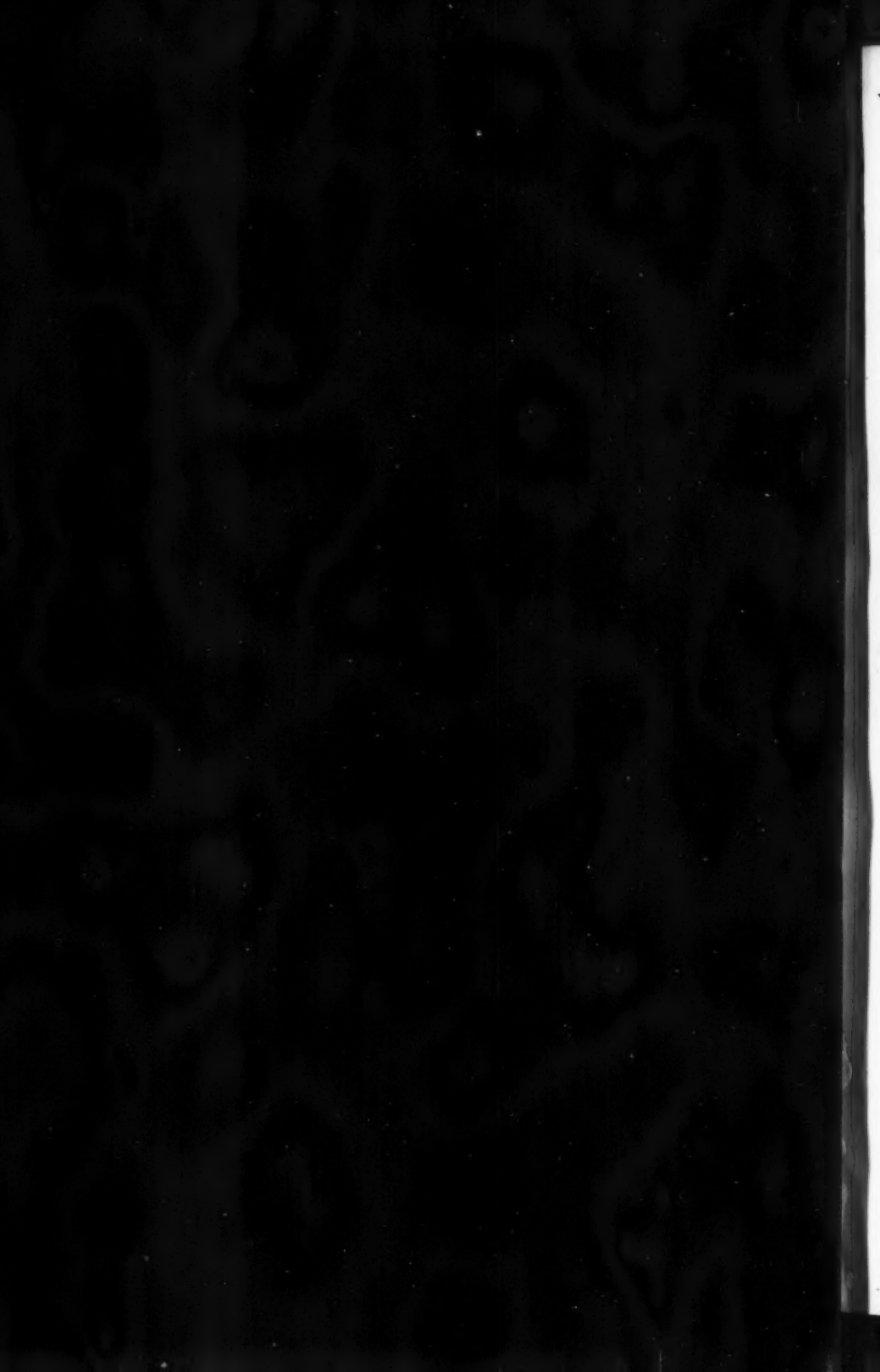
In the January number the accounts and details relating to the second year's work of the 'Donna' will be printed.

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### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*The Editor requests that his Correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss.*





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